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ARTICLES

ON THE POLISH ROOTS OF THE
ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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Abstract. Philosophers of religion of the Cracow Circle (1934-1944) are the principal precursors of what is now called the *analytic philosophy of religion*. The widespread claim that the analytic philosophy of religion was from the beginning an Anglo-American affair is an ill-informed one. It is demonstrable that the enterprise, although not the label "analytic philosophy of religion," appeared in Poland in the 1930's. Józef Bocheński's post-war work is a development of the Cracow Circle's pre-war work in the analytic philosophy of religion, or at least of important elements of that earlier work. Bocheński's approach in his *Logic of Religion* is quite original and might still be profitably studied and discussed by philosophers of religion of the analytic persuasion.

My ambition here is to present the philosophers of religion of the Cracow Circle as the principal precursors of what is now called the *analytic philosophy of religion* and to show that the work of these earlier philosophers was further developed by Polish philosophers in an original way into the 1970's, drawing little inspiration from the Anglo-American trend that began in the 1950's. I am struck by the ignorance of this work that is displayed in much of the contemporary literature that purports to examine the history of this philosophical genre.[1] My impression is that

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[1] For example: William Hasker, "Analytic Philosophy of Religion" in W. J. Wainwright, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Andrew Chignell and Andrew Dole, "The Ethics of Religious Belief: A Recent History" in Andrew Chignell and Andrew Dole, eds., *God and the Ethics of Belief, New Essays in Philosophy of Religion,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Nicholas Wolterstorff, "How Philosophical Theology Became Possible within the Analytic Tradition of Philosophy" in O. D. Crisp & M. C. Rea, eds., *Analytic Theology, New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

contemporary authors typically start with the ill-informed conviction that the analytic philosophy of religion was from the beginning an Anglo-American affair. But in fact it is demonstrable that the enterprise, although not the label "analytic philosophy of religion," appeared in Poland in the 1930's.

Of course, one could say that philosophy of religion done in a recognizably analytic style began with Duns Scotus, Aquinas, and Anselm—and why not Aristotle? But to say that the analytic philosophy of religion began with such thinkers would simply be to use the label "analytic philosophy" not to denote an historical trend in the recent history of philosophy—the standard usage—but to refer to a way of philosophizing that pre-dates the work in logic and the philosophy of language of figures like Frege, Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein that informed analytic philosophy as we speak of it today. I will use the term "analytic philosophy" in the ordinary way, as a label for the "logico-linguistic" style of philosophy that so powerfully exerted itself (especially in the English-speaking world, but also in Austria and elsewhere) after Frege, and, using the term in that way, will maintain that *it was in the 1930's that the analytic philosophy of religion first appeared: not later, in the 1950's, and not in the English-speaking countries but in Poland*, even if today's analytic philosophers of religion are not generally aware of this and often present another narrative. This will occupy the first, historical part of this paper.

In the second part of the paper, I will outline and discuss Józef Bocheński's *Logic of Religion*, a book that was published in English in 1965. I will present Bocheński's work as a post-war development of the Cracow Circle's pre-war work in the analytic philosophy of religion, or at least of important elements of that earlier work. This part of the paper is more of an analysis than a history. Viewed from the standpoint of Anglo-American analytic philosophy of religion as that has developed, Bocheński's approach in the *Logic of Religion* is quite original and might still (after 45 years) be profitably studied and discussed by philosophers of religion of the analytic persuasion. At least, it is my hope to show that it could.

I. THE PHILOSOPHERS OF THE CRACOW CIRCLE
AS PRECURSORS
OF THE ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Precursors of Analytic Philosophy

The French philosopher and historian of science, Georges Canguilhem, wrote some famous pages (famous at least within the French philosophy curriculum) against the notion of a precursor.[2] For him, the history of science would lose its sense by taking seriously the notion of a precursor—someone advancing in a certain direction without arriving at the final point, with someone else, later, continuing on in the same direction and aiming at the same goal. The precursor would be "a thinker of many times," someone "extracted from his cultural frame," Canguilhem maintains:[3] a fiction if not an absurdity. Let us suppose that this claim is correct about the history of science; I wonder if it would also be correct about the history of philosophy. Philosophical conceptions may be viewed as realizations of diverse theoretical possibilities within the total framework of philosophy, and not only as historical events. Sometimes a given theoretical perspective is dominant at one moment, while at another moment it is no longer taken seriously. It can even appear to have run its course and died permanently. On that account of philosophy, a so-called "precursor" is someone who does not belong to the dominant philosophical paradigm of his own epoch, but who, in retrospect, seems to have begun to mine a theoretical possibility currently dominant.

With the advent of analytic philosophy appeared the possibility of exploring the traditional philosophical problems of religion from an analytic perspective. But in what did, and does that perspective consist? The question of defining analytic philosophy is, to be sure, an international sport in which many compete. Here is my own proposal, not very original, that differentiates analytic philosophy from the so-called "Continental tradition."

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[2] Georges Canguilhem, *Études d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences,* (Paris : Vrin, 1994), Introduction.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 21.

Analytic philosophy favors:

1. Argumentation
2. A direct treatment of problems
3. Clarity, precision, and specificity
4. Literality
5. An alethic project in philosophy.

Continental philosophy favors:

A. "Visions"
B. An oblique and historical treatment of problems
C. Depth, breadth, and global perspectives
D. Metaphor and stylistic flourishes
E. An interpretative project in philosophy.

While favoring the analytic style in my own work, I make no judgments here; I am not saying that 1-5 are good and A-E bad. These are differences of objectives and ambitions. It is of course possible to make evaluative judgments concerning these various points of contrast, but one does not have to go so far as to say, for example, that literality is good and metaphor bad, or the reverse, or even that the kind of clarity given by logical analysis is a panacea in philosophy, or that depth is an obvious requirement. What matters here is rather the recognition that the objectives and ambitions are not the same on the two sides, even if there is some overlap and some neutral territory.

What is specifically important for my discussion in this section is just that analytic philosophy, from its very beginning, presented the possibility of a philosophy of religion incorporating the objectives and ambitions of the analytic approach.[4] Histories of the analytic philosophy of religion generally claim that this possibility began to be exploited only in 1955, when Anthony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre edited *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*.[5] The implication is that the analytic philosophy of religion is an essentially Anglo-American development. If we consider analytic philosophy in general, it is obvious that no claim of a narrowly

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[4] This possibility was already manifest in § 53 of Frege's *Foundations of Arithmetic*.

[5] Anthony Flew & Alisdair MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology,* (London: SCM Press), 1955.

Anglo-American pedigree can be taken seriously, for analytic philosophy is in no small part a Central European affair (German, Austrian, Polish, Czechoslovakian), as many historical works show clearly.[6] And as for the analytic philosophy of religion, its correctly named precursors were Jan Salamucha,[7] Jan Drewnowski,[8] Bolesław Sobociński,[9] and Józef Bocheński, all members of the "Cracow Circle";[10] so it is historically false that its roots are Anglo-American.

Of course, the historical events at the end of the 1930's in Poland were very unfavorable for the further development of this Polish analytic philosophy of religion and of philosophy in general. Jan Salamucha died heroically during the Warsaw uprising (1944); Father Bocheński fought with Polish troops against the Germans, especially in Italy (Monte Cassino). After the war, Bocheński lived in Switzerland at the Dominican monastery of Fribourg (Albertinum), and taught philosophy (and

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[6] See Michael Dummett, *Origins of Analytical Philosophy,* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993). See also works by Peter Simons, Barry Smith, Kevin Mulligan, and, in French, by Jacques Bouveresse and Jean-Pierre Cometti, on the importance of Austrian (and Polish) philosophy in the development of analytic philosophy.

[7] Jan Salamucha, *Wiedza i wiara, Wybrane pisma filozoficzne,* Pod redakcja J. Jadackiego i K. Swiętorzeckiej, (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1997); *Knowledge and Faith,* ed. by K. Swiętorzecka & J. Jadacki, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003). See R. Pouivet, "Faith, Reason, and Logic" in T. L. Smith, ed., *Faith and Reason,* (South Bend: St Augustine's Press, 2001); and R. Pouivet, "Jan Salamucha's Analytic Thomism" in S. Lapointe, J. Woleński, M. Marion, & W. Miśkiewicz, *The Golden Age of Polish Philosophy,* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

[8] Jan Franciszek Drewnowski, *Filozofia i precyzja,* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1996). (A former student of Kotarbiński.)

[9] Sobociński was a professional logician. He was Leśniewski's assistant, but he never published anything on the topic.

[10] Bocheński's paper, "The Cracow Circle", in K. Szaniawski, ed., *The Vienna Circle and the Lvov-Warsaw School,* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989) provides historical information. One can also recommend a web site dedicated to the Cracow Circle: <http://segr-did2. fmag.unict.it/~polphil/PolPhil/Cracow/Cracow.html>. In *Entre la logique et la foi, Entretiens avec J. M. Bocheński* (collected by J. Parys, tr. E. Morin-Aguilar), Bocheński claims that the members of the Cracow Circle were attacked (especially Salamucha) by the Polish Church, because they wanted to use the new logical instruments to discuss ancient scholastic arguments. "What would Saint Thomas have done today? He would have used mathematical logic, because it is the best, but that was exactly what the relics of ancient times rejected" (p. 22). Bocheński also refers to Father Clark in America and Father Bendiek in Germany, who also tried to use the new logical instruments to examine theological arguments. But they were completely isolated, he says.

Soviet studies) at the University of Fribourg, though he also sojourned frequently in the United States, especially at Notre Dame University.[11]

The Medieval Model

Two main commitments were fundamental to the Cracow Circle. The first of these was that the logical tools introduced into philosophy by Frege, Russell, and the Lvov-Warsaw School (Jan Łukasiewicz, Alfred Tarski, Tadeusz Kotarbiński)[12] are the best instruments to apply to the study of traditional problems about God, especially in the analysis and assessment of the proofs of His existence. The second was the conviction that the traditional questions of metaphysics, natural theology, and philosophical theology are not meaningless—contrary to what was suggested by logical positivists of the Vienna Circle.[13] These two elements anticipated analytic philosophy of religion as it has developed from the 1950's to the present.

Thus, for example, Plantinga proposed a new analysis of Anselm's ontological argument in terms of modal logic (by using the S5 system).[14] The Cracow Circle had the same sort of ambition: to examine and, eventually, to improve ancient arguments by using new logical methods. The logical instruments that were applied underwent a certain amount of evolution between the 1930's and the 1970's, but the project is essentially the same. The opposition of Polish philosophers to the positivist critique of metaphysics as meaningless[15] also anticipates the renaissance of metaphysics in analytic philosophy (Alvin Plantinga, David Lewis, David Armstrong, Peter van Inwagen, etc.) and what may be called its "pre-Kantian attitude."

Two historical remarks may help here to better appreciate the Cracow Circle's project and to show how the Cracow Circle philosophers anticipated the later analytic philosophy of religion.

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[11] Józef Bocheński, *Wspomnienia,* (Komorow: Wydawnictwo Antyk, 1994).

[12] Jan Woleński, *Logic and Philosophy in the Lvov-Warsaw School,* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989); Roger Pouivet & Manuel Rebuschi, eds., *La philosophie en Pologne 1918-1939,* (Paris: Vrin, 2006).

[13] See Klemens Szaniawski, ed., *The Vienna Circle and the Lvov-Warsaw School*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989).

[14] Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), chap. X.

[15] See M. Przelecki, "The Approach to Metaphysics in the Lvov-Warsaw School" in K. Szanawski, ed., *The Vienna Circle and the Lvov-Warsaw School,* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989).

1. Salamucha, who worked in part within the lineage of the medieval scholar Konstanty Michalski (a specialist of 14th-century nominalism),[16] and Bocheński, whose academic field was the history of logic,[17] thought that Scholastic philosophy provided a rationalistic model that was to be emulated in dealing with metaphysical problems. The Scholastic model focused on arguments and examined them through public, dialectical procedures. In other words, the model of philosophy is not that of the great modern systems (Descartes' *Meditations* or Spinoza's *Ethics*); nor is it that of the broad interpretative systems of German idealism (Fichte, Schelling and Hegel) or the project of a global hermeneutics (as in Nietzsche and Heidegger). The model is rather constituted by the logical and technical discussions that we find in the works of Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Ockham, and also in some less well-known philosophers and logicians of the Medieval period.

One could complain that Michalski and Bocheński somewhat misrepresented Medieval Philosophy, which cannot be completely identified with the dialectical (or logical) period of the 13th and 14th centuries. But what is important to understanding their project is that they viewed a particular dialectical moment in the history of philosophy, re-articulated in terms of new (Fregean and Russellian) logical instruments, as constituting a methodological model that informed the philosophy of religion of the Cracow Circle. And it is this same model of philosophy that has now generally been taken up by analytic philosophers of religion. It would not be an exaggeration to speak of a renewal of Scholasticism, which must however be clearly distinguished from Neo-scholasticism.

"Neo-scholasticism" is a broad appellation that covers different trends. Its overarching project was to restore fundamental doctrines of Catholic thought. Neo-scholasticism has, alas, sometimes amounted to the pious and dogmatic rehearsal of the views of Aquinas, or, more properly, of the "Neo-scholastic Aquinas": an ecclesial creation of the end of the 19th century. What was intellectually alive and searching in Aquinas, and what was an argumentative discourse between Aquinas and other philosophers, both from earlier times and from his own time,

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[16] See Claude Pannacio, "Konstanty Michalski on Late Medieval Nominalism" in S. Lapointe, J. Woleński, M. Marion, & W. Miśkiewicz, *The Golden Age of Polish Philosophy*.

[17] His book in German, *Formale Logik*, was translated into English in 1961: *A History of Formal Logic,* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press).

was transformed by Neo-scholasticism into an ideological system, the goal of which was to oppose Catholic thought to modern philosophy and to construct a refuge for believers against what was considered to be modern errors coming from the Enlightenment.

2. Salamucha and Bocheński adopted a deliberately non-Neo-scholastic attitude toward Medieval philosophy. As we noted, the Cracow Circle aimed to reconstruct Medieval arguments, especially proofs of the existence of God, using new logical tools, thereby to improve them, so that these arguments could be scrutinized philosophically in their best versions. The Cracow philosophers also wanted to renew discussion of certain basic concepts in metaphysics, for example the concepts of *essence*, *abstraction*, and *the transcendental*, by using the technical means provided by the new philosophy of logic. Thus, both the Cracow Circle and the current analytic philosophy of religion find inspiration in a reconstructed history of Medieval philosophy. In both cases, it is through a reparsing into our own philosophical idiom that historical philosophical theories are understood. This approach rejects what we may call an "archeological attitude" and is meant to deliver us from anachronism.[18]

Such are the reasons why it seems to me historically correct to claim that the analytic philosophy of religion began in Poland in the 1930's, at a time when British and American analytic philosophers had not yet embarked upon any such project. One reason why Polish philosophers could pursue this project is that Polish "scientific" philosophers in general, and the Cracow Circle philosophers in particular, never suffered from the "principle of verification" syndrome or from any form of doctrinal empiricism. The idea that "scientific" thinking in philosophy requires one to adopt an empirical or naturalistic criterion of meaning was quite foreign to the Lvov-Warsaw school of philosophy.

The Principle of Verification and the Critique of "Onomatoids"

To explain this point, I think it useful to refer to Kotarbiński's very strong critique of "onomatoids" (apparent-terms or pseudo-terms).[19] These are

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[18] See Roger Pouivet, *Philosophie contemporaine,* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008), chap. II.

[19] See Tadeusz Kotarbiński, *Gnosiology, The Scientific Approach to the Theory of Knowledge,* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966. This is the translation by O. Wojtasiewicz of the second edition of *Elementy teorii poznania, logiki formalnej i metodologii nauk*

terms that appear to be concrete when in fact they are not. Not only "the golden mountain," "the present King of France," and "Madame Bovary's grand-mother," but also "the Unconscious," "the invisible hand," and "deconstruction," are all onomatoids. Kotarbiński's so-called "reism"[20] posits that terms such as "smoothness" and "relationship," along with all names of properties or events, are onomatoids. The doctrine of onomatoids is, I think, part of an ethics of intellectual belief that is meant to make us aware of the risk, especially in the teaching of humanistic disciplines, of pseudo-terms.[21] But note that Kotarbiński does not use this doctrine against metaphysics, and, especially, he does not say that "God" is an onomatoid. If God is a concrete entity, "God" is not at all a pseudo-term.

The principle of verification seemed to mandate the elimination of theology and all serious religious discourse. At best, such discourse is construed as fictional or poetic. But the critique of onomatoids does not have this consequence. This is the reason why an analytic philosophy of religion was possible already in the 1930's, in a country where the notion of "onomatoids" was in use. But logical positivism, and the form of naturalism that replaced it, for example in Quine's philosophy, made matters more difficult in the English-speaking countries (where positivism was not really native but derived from the Vienna Circle and its followers). Of course, verificationism did not survive for very long. But it had strong consequences for the analytic mode of philosophizing even after it had been severely criticized and generally abandoned.

Unburdened by the principle of verification, the Cracow Circle philosophers had the space needed to become the genuine precursors of the analytic philosophy of religion. Later on, English-speaking analytic philosophers of religion followed the path of Polish philosophers of whose work they were unaware. This is why I find strong reason to question the narrative according to which the philosophy of religion came late into

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(1929), an obligatory reading for the students of the University of Warsaw during the thirties. See also Peter Geach, "Names in Kotarbiński's *Elementy*" in J. Wolenski, ed., *Kotarbiński: Logic, Semantics, and Ontology,* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990).

[20] Jan Woleński, "Reism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2004 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reism/>.

[21] See Roger Pouivet, "Kotarbiński et l'éthique intellectuelle", in R. Pouivet & M. Rebuschi, eds., *La philosophie en Pologne 1918-1939* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2006).

the analytic movement, in the 1950's to be more precise. For what has since been called "Analytic Thomism" had already been introduced by Salamucha and Bocheński, before the Second World War;[22] and it seems to me that this amounted to an initiation of the whole program that we now call the "analytic philosophy of religion."

What happened in Polish philosophy after the Second World War? We find Marxist-inspired works, epistemology and philosophy of science (or what Polish philosophers of the so-called "Poznan School" called "Methodology"), logical works (very technical even if quite inventive, for example the works of Roman Suszko; though such works were often detached from philosophical concerns), social and political philosophy, and the phenomenological school that Roman Ingarden initiated in Cracow.[23] The philosophy of religion was pursued in Catholic universities, though mainly in Lublin[24], with figures like Karol Wojtyła, the future John-Paul II. This was largely neo-scholastic philosophy, with influences from French philosophers like Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, Jean Nabert, Maurice Nédoncelle, and from the phenomenology inspired by Max Scheler; and its practitioners were more interested in "existentialism" than in analytic philosophy.

And Bocheński? At the University of Friburg, in Switzerland, he created a department of Soviet studies and was one of the leading specialists of Communist thought, even acting as a consultant for Western governments in "Kremlinology." But he also defended, in numerous books, a conception of philosophy inspired by the methodological ideals of the Lvov-Warsaw school. While Bocheński is better known for his

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[22] For the notion of "Analytic Thomism", see John Haldane, "Analytical Thomism: A Brief Introduction", *Monist,* October 1997, vol. 80, Nr 4 (Analytical Thomism); see also Roger Pouivet, "Le thomisme analytique, à Cracovie et ailleurs", *Revue Internationale de Philosophique,* n°3/2003 (Philosophie analytique de la religion).

[23] See Zbigniew A. Jordan, *Philosophy and Ideology: The Development of Philosophy and Marxism-Leninism in Poland since the Second World War,* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1963).

[24] See Mieczyslaw Krąpiec, Andrzej Maryniaczyk, *The Lublin Philosophical School,* (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwina, Katedra Metafizyki KUL, 2010). In the Lublin School, Jerzy Kalinowski is an interesting figure. From Lublin, he emigrated to France at the end of the 1950's, and developed there—in the "golden age" of French Marxism and Structuralism—deontological logic and Thomistic metaphysics. See Jerzy Kalinowski, *L'impossible métaphysique,* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981); Michel Bastit & Roger Pouivet, eds., *Jerzy Kalinowski: Logique et Normativité, Philosophia Scientiae,* vol. 10, cahier, 2006.

works in the history of logic, especially the logic of antiquity and the Middle Ages, he also wrote a *Logic of Religion* published in 1965, based upon lectures given at New York University in 1963. My question is: How is it possible for such a book to be published in the United States at that date, in English, and then to be virtually ignored by analytic philosophers of religion?[25] Anthony Kenny edited Salamucha's paper on the formalization of Aquinas's proof *ex motu* in *Aquinas, A Collection of Critical Essays*.[26] But, in general, the Polish roots of the analytic philosophy of religion, and its further development by Bocheński, have simply been ignored. Could it be that the narratives of the history of the analytic philosophy of religion suffer from parochialism?

II. THE JUSTIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE IN BOCHEŃSKI'S *LOGIC OF RELIGION*

The Analysis of Religious Discourse

Having reviewed the relevant history of the Cracow Circle and mentioned the decline, and inchoate resurrection, of Polish analytic philosophy of religion in the wake of the Second World War, I now turn to a somewhat more detailed account and analysis of Józef Bocheński's justification of religious discourse, as presented in his *Logic of Religion*. This will provide the reader with a better idea of the kind of work that derived, in the post-war period, from the Cracow Circle's pre-war program concerning religious belief.

It is clear that the *Logic of Religion* may be understood in part as a development of the thinking of the Cracow Circle, although the case must not be overstated, and it is difficult to say to what extent Bocheński himself thought of it in that way. One reason is that he includes neither quotations nor references in the book, and so no explicit connection is made to Salamucha or other members of the Cracow Circle although the influences may be justly inferred. The reason given by Bocheński for this

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[25] The book was reviewed in the *Philosophical Review* vol. 76, Nr 4, 1967; but beyond that, it was hardly noticed by those writing in the field.

[26] A. Kenny, *Aquinas : A Collection of Critical Essays,* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 1976).

omission of references is that *The Logic of Religion* is a "purely speculative book."[27] But many purely speculative books contain quotations and references. By "speculative," Bocheński seems to mean that his account is *a priori:* not historical, empirical, or hermeneutical. This gives to the book a very special rhetorical aspect that is characteristic of the Lvov-Warsaw school,[28] and in itself constitutes a good reason for thinking that the book continues the Cracow Circle's program in philosophy of religion.

The book could also be said not to be about religion, but about religious discourse. And it is surely one of the main methodological aspects of the Lvov-Warsaw school and (consequently) of the Cracow circle, that the analysis of language is considered the proper medium by which to approach many domains in philosophy. We may note that Bocheński is a realist (as were the Polish philosophers of the Lvov-Warsaw school generally). He says, "when a logician states that, if no A is B, then no B is A, he is not talking about the rules of reasoning but, at least primarily, he is establishing a necessary connection between two states of things."[29] Thus, to be about religious discourse is not to be about discourse alone. Even less is it to suggest that religious matters are simply linguistic matters, or that religion is a language game with no matters of fact or realities to be considered.

Bocheński endeavors, first, to prove that general logic can be applied to religious discourse (Chapter II, "Religion and Logic"); secondly, to describe the formal structure of religious discourse and the logical relations between religious and profane discourses (Chapter III, "The Structure of Religious Discourse"); and thirdly, to discuss certain fundamental problems concerning the meaning and justification of religious discourse (Chapter IV, "Meaning in Religious Discourse," and Chapter V, "Justification of Religious Discourse.")[30] I will here briefly discuss the part of the book that concerns the justification of religious discourse. The reason is that a central part of the analytic philosophy

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[27] Joseph M. Bochenski, *The Logic of Religion,* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. VII.

[28] Today, the followers of the Lvov-Warsaw school still employ this rhetoric (perhaps one could even say *aesthethics*) of axiomatics in philosophy.

[29] J. M. Bochenski, *The Logic of Religion,* p. 4.

[30] This the way the program of the book is described by W. Rowe in his review of the book (*Philosophical Review,* vol. 76, Nr 4, 1967).

of religion has been devoted, at least until recently, to this problem of justification. It is thus especially interesting to compare Bocheński's account with what contemporary writers call the "epistemology of religious beliefs."

The Question of Justification

What Bocheński proposes are distinctions which, in the end, yield a classification of the different theories of justification. Justification can be *direct* or *indirect*. In the former case, justification is "an act of (sensuous or non sensuous) insight; the object must always be present."[31] If the justification is indirect, "it consists of a reasoning; the object is not present."[32] Indirect justification is deductive or reductive; and here Bocheński borrows a distinction from Łukasiewicz (and Jevons, according to Łukasiewicz). Here is Bocheński's explanation of the distinction:

> Every reasoning has as one premise a conditional, or a sentence which can be easily transformed into a conditional. As the premise we use, in deduction, a sentence of the same shape as the antecedent of that conditional and obtain as conclusion a sentence of the shape of its consequent. In reduction we have as a second premise a sentence of the shape of the consequent, and we obtain as conclusion a sentence of the shape of the antecedent of the first premise.[33]

This means that the reductive reasoning can be either *inductive* or *abductive*.

If the premises are taken from basic dogma, the question becomes that of knowing how the dogma is itself justified. The basic dogma is "a meta-logical rule, according to which every element of objective faith … has to be accepted as true."[34] Then, two questions may be asked:

(A)   Is it possible to justify the basic dogma?
(B)   And if it is, what is the difference between a justification in the religious discourse and in the profane discourse?

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[31] J. M. Bochenski, *The Logic of Religion*, p. 118.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 120.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

These problems are considered by Bocheński to be "problems of applied logic, and therefore . . . we are trying to carry out logical analysis of a material which is empirically given."[35] Logic is here applied to a certain extra-logical field. But this can be done in two different ways. (1) One can add some extra-logical terms, axioms and rules to certain portions of formal logic. "In this sense, for example, contemporary physics or any sort of theology is applied logic,"[36] Bocheński says. (2) But in the "proper use of the term . . . we may mean by 'applied logic' the study of those logical laws and rules . . . which are used in a given field."[37] Very often, such special parts of logic must be developed *ad hoc*, according to the use that is made of them in the field in question.[38] Bocheński defines a theorem:

> For all f: if f is a field of human activity, then there is applied logic of f if and only if f includes discourse which embodies or expresses some objective structures.[39]

It seems to me that what we would today call the "epistemology of religious beliefs" is what Bocheński considers to be the applied logic of religious discourse. Logic has historically been developed for the sake of science and therefore limited to propositions, whether logical or factual. But that limitation is not a necessity. For example, during the 20th century, a formal logic of morals was developed in which most formulae represent not indicative sentences but imperative ones. And performative sentences have also been shown to be appropriate objects of formal logical study. Logic cannot be applied "where there is no discourse at all" or "where discourse is present, but does not embody or express an objective structure."[40] This is the case if a discourse is completely meaningless or if it expresses only subjective states (although even in this

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[35] *Ibid.,* p. 125.

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 6.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] I think that this difference is important: a large part of what has been done in logical studies under the name of "non classical logic" is in fact what Bocheński calls "applied logic", i.e. an *ad hoc* logic made to formalize the way we reason in a given field rather than a formal logic independent of any given field.

[39] J. M. Bochenski, *The Logic of Religion,* p. 7.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

last case a semantics is possible, but this semantics cannot be formal). And it is also only if a discourse expresses not only objective structures but propositions that a methodology is possible, "for methodology is essentially a theory of truth-conditions, and only propositions are true."[41]

An Epistemological Inquiry

According to Bocheński, the condition for framing an "applied logic" (and thus an epistemology of religious belief, if I am right in thinking that these are the same) is a propositional account of religious belief. A negative answer to the question whether it is possible to justify basic dogma (question (A), above) seems to entail a non-propositional account of religious belief, because it forbids the application of logic to religious discourse. In connection with the justification of basic dogma, Bocheński speaks about "the blind-leap theory," that is, a theory of justification of religious discourse that describes faith as *belief in virtue of absurdity*: *Credo quia absurdum,* as Tertullian said. I suppose that Bocheński has in mind something like Kierkegaard's account. At any rate, the notion of a "blind leap" seems to be Kierkegaardian. This non-propositional account of religious belief is also akin to Wittgenstein's theory of religious discourse in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and even more to the account of religious commitment given in his lectures on religious belief. Bocheński is quite critical of the blind-leap theory. For him, vast parts of religious discourse are not intended to be understood as propositional, but "some parts of the religious discourse of every religion are intended by their users to express and assert propositions."[42] This means that Bocheński rejects a purely phenomenological account of religious belief. If belief were completely indifferent to the truth of propositions composing the Creed, for example, that would constitute a deep modification of the nature of religious belief as traditionally understood. It seems to me that it would mean, above all, that religious "belief" would consist only in a certain sort of experience and an attitude of faith without any propositional content. In that case, *religion would lie beyond the limits of logic and of epistemology.*

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[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.,* p. 41.

On the other hand, for Bocheński, if there is positive answer to the question (A), then that answer may be either "complete" or "incomplete."[43] "Complete" does not mean that the believer purports to have full certainty, "comparable with that of direct insight or of convincing deductive proof."[44] It means rather that the acceptance of the basic dogma is determined solely and entirely by a rational justification. "Incomplete" means that the act of faith is decisive. And by *faith*, one means something (a) *distinct* from science (there is no "proof"), (b) *free* (there is no compelling reason to accept it) and freely chosen (a matter of will), and (c) *certain* (but in a different way from that which is scientifically certain). "Faith is said to be produced by the human will with the help of divine grace, or by illumination by Buddha, and so on,"[45] Bocheński says.

Thus, a theory of *complete* (if not deductive or intuitively direct) justification of religious discourse is a rationalistic theory. The premises used in such a case can be factual (strictly rationalistic theory) or can be sentences expressing accepted moral and esthetic propositions (broadly rationalistic theory). The first case corresponds, it seems to me, to natural theology, and the second case corresponds to moral arguments within the epistemology of religious belief. Bocheński himself rejects a *strictly* rationalistic theory: religious discourse and profane discourse would thereby be confused. According to him, logic of religion seems to show that the project of natural theology, except perhaps as a part of a justificatory process,[46] is an impossible one. But more broadly, the project of a complete justification is criticized. The (free) act of faith seems to be indispensable.

An *incomplete* justification can be *direct* or *indirect*. Bocheński does not say a lot about the difference. He seems to mean that a direct justification is not built upon deductive or reductive reasoning. Two

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[43] *Ibid.,* p. 127.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 131.

[45] *Ibid.,* p. 135. In this sense, the *Logic of Religion* is not so far from what Cardinal Newman called a *Grammar of Assent,* even if Newman's project stresses the psychological aspects (at least in the sense of a philosophical psychology) of this justificatory process, and Bocheński's its logical aspects. For a recent account that deals historically and theoretically with similar questions (the relation between the motives of credibility and the act of faith), see the remarkable book by John T. Lamont, *Divine Faith,* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[46] However, Bocheński says nothing about this possibility.

theories of incomplete direct justification are discussed: the supernatural "insight theory" and the "trust theory." Bocheński claims that the former "has never been seriously defended and does not merit consideration," which I find strange. For the French philosopher and theologian, Arnaud, so influenced by Augustine (and Descartes), says in the *Logique de Port-Royal*: "Just as no other marks are needed to distinguish light from darkness except the light itself which makes itself sensed sufficiently, so no marks are necessary to recognize the truth but the very brightness which surrounds it and to which the mind submits, persuading it in spite of itself."[47] One might also say that, in a sense, Plantinga's Calvinist-inspired notion of *sensus divinatis* corresponds in part to the insight theory. The proper function of the *sensus divinitatis* and the operation of the internal instigation of the Holy Spirit are presented by Plantinga in terms of an immediate (i.e., non-inferential) awareness of the truth of theistic, and specifically Christian, belief. But Bocheński considers that insight can be used only to justify a necessary sentence, and sentences belonging to the basic dogma are not necessary. "Such sentences cannot be justified by direct insight, not even in part,"[48] he maintains. If Plantinga's account corresponds even partly to what Bocheński calls the insight theory, it would mean that someone has recently defended this theory that Bocheński thought had never been defended by anyone.

In connection with the "trust theory," Bocheński criticizes the case where the basic dogma is justified by direct trust in Revealing agency, exactly as a child believes its mother when she says that there is a city called "New York." Bocheński defends what one calls today a reductionist theory of testimony, like Hume's, according to which testimony is credible only because, and to the extent that, one has independent reasons for accepting whatever testimony led to its formation. But Bocheński defends this position only in the case of religious trust. For, in religious trust, we are not exactly in the same situation as the child and its mother. "You can trust only a person whom you know to exist,"[49] Bocheński says, and so you need prior confirmation that God exists in order to have confidence in the truth of what He says. And you even need prior confirmation that

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[47] Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *Logic, or the Art of Thinking,* tr. and ed. J.V. Buroker, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 8.

[48] J. M. Bochenski, *The Logic of Religion*, p. 128.

[49] *Ibid.,* p. 137.

God is speaking. The child, by contrast, knows directly of the existence of its mother and also knows that it is she who speaks. So the "trust theory" does not find strong support according to Bocheński.

An indirect theory of justification can be deductivist. "Radical" deductivism purports to establish, by deductive means, the certainty of religious discourse to a greater degree than can attach to any other knowledge. A more "moderate" deductivism "admits that there is, in religious discourse, an element that is not demonstrable: but whatever is demonstrable in religious discourse is demonstrable by deductive proof."[50] The main objection by Bocheński against deductivism is "that no historical sentence can be demonstrated by deduction."[51] But if one means to prove, from a proof of the existence of God, the truth of propositions contained in a Creed, then one must establish historical sentences deductively; and this is impossible, according to Bocheński.

The Negative Results of Bocheński's Epistemology of Religious Belief

Two other indirect theories of justification exist, both reductive, and thus both applying only inductive rules. Consequently, they cannot yield certainty. "As a result, what has been said above about the incompleteness of every justification of the basic dogma is confirmed,"[52] says Bocheński. In one kind of reductive theory, the basic dogma is supported by authority; not the authority of the Revealing agent, however, but a human authority. Acceptance of the latter may come through insight into the person of the authority itself, as when a child accepts the word of its mother, although more often there is a reasoning process that conduces to the acceptance of such an authority. The incomplete and reductive theory is "the religious hypothesis." According to Bocheński, "This theory has been voiced many times by different theologians, mostly under misleading titles such as 'pragmatic justification.'"[53] The basic dogma is constructed by the believer, prior to the act of faith itself, in the form of an explanatory sentence. This is the *religious hypothesis*, and it serves to explain his experience. This is close to a reductive argument, and, I think, amounts to what we now

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[50] *Ibid.,* p. 140.
[51] *Ibid.,* p. 141.
[52] *Ibid.,* p. 141.
[53] *Ibid.,* p. 148.

call "an inference to the best explanation." But Bocheński thinks that in the case of a religious hypothesis, the experiential sentences which form the starting point of the inference have very broad content, even encompassing a person's "total experience." The difference between this and the method of hypotheses in the sciences is that sentences concerning moral and esthetic values are included. The religious hypothesis has the advantage of giving a meaning to the world and to existence, as some writers might express it, or playing "the role of an axiom out of which the remainder is thought to be deduced,"[54] as Bocheński says. He also notes two "curious phenomena" concerning the religious hypothesis model: "the difficulty of persuading another man of his truth" (for we do not have the same total experience) and "the difficulty of overthrowing [such an hypothesis] by falsification"[55] (due especially to its breadth).

Finally the situation of the justification of religious discourse, and belief, seems to be logically and epistemologically *bad,* in Bocheński's view. We have many theories: the rationalistic theory, the trust theory, the deductivist theory, the authority theory, the theory of the religious hypothesis. But none of them seems easily defensible, or even defensible with difficulties. Ultimately, Bocheński is not prepared to say that religious discourse is logically warranted or justified. At least, the justification *of* religious discourse, as contrasted with justification *within* religious discourse, is not at all convincing. But for Bocheński what matters for the philosophy of religion (as contrasted with apologetics) is the mapping of the theories and their epistemology, and not the conclusion that religious beliefs are ultimately warranted or justified. Clearly, for Father Bocheński, they are not!

CONCLUSION

If what I said in this paper is right, then the analytic philosophy of religion is a Polish initiative. In the first place, this claim helps to rectify an image of Polish philosophy of religion as mainly a *mélange* of Neo-Thomism and phenomenology, as illustrated, for example, in the philosophical

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[54] *Ibid.,* p. 149.
[55] *Ibid.,* pp. 149-50.

and theological works of John Paul II. Secondly, this claim shows also that some recent papers[56] present an inaccurate, or at least incomplete, narrative about the analytic philosophy of religion, and the present article may serve to correct some historical mistakes. Thirdly, just as some works in the history of analytic philosophy have had the result of happily bringing this philosophy back to Central Europe, where it was so important before the Second World War, I hope that the rediscovery of the Cracow Circle may encourage, for the analytic philosophy of religion, the same sort of return to its home ground. Finally, a re-examination and appreciation of Polish work—not least Bocheński's *Logic of Religion*—will show that mainstream analytic philosophy of religion has yet to meet challenges heretofore overlooked. The very systematic way Bocheński examines the possible ways of analyzing the question of the justification of religious belief shows that these are not so numerous. His method is "logical," systematic, and *a priori*. In the end, Bocheński's conclusion concerning the justification of religious belief is skeptical. Those who wish to claim that justification is somehow possible must show that there are possibilities that do not fall into one of Bocheński's categories, or that the distinctions he proposed were not the right ones.

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[56] See note 1.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSES IN WESTERN SPIRITUALITY AND THE ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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Abstract. The doctrine of the spiritual senses has played a significant role in the history of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox spirituality. What has been largely unremarked is that the doctrine also played a significant role in classical Protestant thought, and that analogous concepts can be found in Indian theism. In spite of the doctrine's significance, however, the only analytic philosopher to consider it has been Nelson Pike. I will argue that his treatment is inadequate, show how the development of the doctrine in Puritan thought and spirituality fills a serious lacuna in Pike's treatment, and conclude with some suggestions as to where the discussion should go next.[1]

The concept of the spiritual senses has played a significant role in the history of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox spirituality. It goes back at least as far as Origen, and figures prominently in the work of theologians as diverse as Bonaventure and Hans Urs von Balthasar. What is less well known (indeed almost totally unremarked) is that the doctrine also played an important role in some classical Protestant thought and spirituality. This is important for it suggests that the doctrine is (or at least should be) an important feature of Christian spiritual theology in general, and raises the question of whether similar concepts can be found in other theistic traditions. In spite of its importance, however, the concept has been almost totally neglected by analytic philosophers of religion. My essay will be divided into three parts. I will begin by

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examining the only treatment of the doctrine by an analytic philosopher that I am aware of (namely, Nelson Pike's). I will then show how the development of the doctrine of the spiritual senses in Puritan thought and spirituality fills a serious lacuna in Pike's treatment, and conclude by saying a few words about where I think the discussion should now go.

I. PIKE AND THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

The first two chapters of Nelson Pike's *Mystic Union*[2] describe what are commonly regarded as the three principal forms of mystical prayer. The soul is directly aware of God in each but the degree of intimacy and the place of encounter differ. In the Prayer of Quiet, "God and the soul are close to each other" (Pike 5). In Full Union and (the culmination of) Rapture, however, they penetrate each other; God and the soul are held in mutual embrace. In the Prayer of Quiet and Full Union, the encounter between self and God takes place *within* the soul of the mystic. In Rapture, it transpires *outside* it. Quiet and Union thus differ with respect to the nature of the encounter but are alike with respect to its place or domain. In Full Union and Rapture, the *nature* of the encounter is the same but its *place* differs.

Chapter 3 discusses the doctrine of the spiritual senses which asserts that there are "five spiritual sense faculties" bearing "some likeness to the exterior senses" (Teresa of Avila) "by which God's presence in the various states of union is detected" (Pike 42). As Pike understands the doctrine, when the Christian mystic "claims to have 'seen' God, or to have 'smelled' or 'tasted'" him, she "means to be affirming that God was detected in the encounter via actual sensations that are at least similar . . . to the bodily perceptions usually identified with these terms" (Pike 44).

Sight, hearing and smell are distance senses. (I not only see things at a distance, I hear what is going on in the next room, and smell what is cooking in the kitchen when I am in the hall. Touch typically requires contact but I can feel the fire while standing at some distance from it.)

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[2] Nelson Pike, *Mystic Union: An Essay in the Phenomenology of Mysticism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992. The descriptive portions of *Mystic Union* rely heavily on the earlier work of Augustin Poulain and Albert Farges.

In the Prayer of Quiet, God and the soul "are close but not so close as to preclude them coming closer . . . . In Full Union and . . . Rapture, God and the soul are in double embrace" (Pike 49). One would therefore expect that God would be detected by analogues of the distance senses in the Prayer of Quiet, and by analogues of taste and touch in Full Union and Rapture.

According to Pike this is exactly what we find. In the Prayer of Quiet, God is "heard,"[3] "smelled," and "touched" "in the restricted sense appropriate when the object perceived is still at some distance from the perceiver" (Pike 51). (Thus "Teresa says that the soul feels the heat coming from the 'interior depths'" [Pike 50)].) In Full Union and Rapture, God is touched and tasted.

There are anomalies, though. First, although sight is the paradigmatic distance sense, spiritual sight is seldom if ever associated with the Prayer of Quiet. It is frequently mentioned in connection with Full Union,[4] however, and is especially associated with Rapture. Second, Pike thinks that the objects of spiritual hearing, touch, taste and smell bear some comparison (if only remote) to their ordinary counterparts. The object of spiritual taste, for example, is God's "sweetness," and the object of spiritual touch is his "caress" or "touch." The exception is spiritual sight whose typical objects are "power, will, justice, goodness," and the like, that is, properties whose ordinary counterparts *cannot* "be apprehended in simple acts of [visual] perception." It thus seems "that if we are to retain a parallel between spiritual sight and bodily sight, we shall have to introduce an analogue of '*bodily* form' that can be spiritually seen" (Pike 60-61, my emphasis.) The trouble is that references to anything like this

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[3] Pike quotes Ambrose who claims to "hear God's voice" in this state (the Prayer of Quiet) (Pike 51). Given Pike's schema, this is of course appropriate since hearing is a distance sense. But how often is "hearing" referred to at this stage? And when it is, how often does it refer to nothing more than a so-called "interior locution" (words or thoughts suddenly occurring to one) and not to a direct perception of God himself? (Question: Are the words or thoughts in these locutions *perceived* as coming from God himself. [Cf. My hearing my wife speak], or does one instead *infer* that they do, or simply form the *conviction* that they do. [Cf. I receive a letter from my wife without her signature or address.])

[4] But see Poulain's *Graces of Interior Prayer* (St. Louis: Herder, 1950), page 56, where he says that "as a rule, spiritual visual perceptions are absent in Full Union as they are in the Prayer of Quiet."

seldom (if ever) occur in descriptions of the Prayer of Quiet, Full Union, or Rapture.[5]

The fact that the paradigmatic distance sense (sight) normally comes into play only in Rapture, in which God and the soul indwell one anotherr and are therefore *not* at a distance, and that there are no divine analogues of the objects of ordinary visual experience (color, shape, etc.) suggests to me that the doctrine of the spiritual senses imposes an overly rigid conceptual scheme on a comparatively unsystematic and fluid use of perceptual metaphors. A number of additional considerations reinforce this suspicion. Let me mention two of the most important.

(1) Pike claims that since God and the soul remain at some distance from one another in the Prayer of Quiet, the spiritual senses most appropriate to this form of union will be distance senses. Touch is involved but "only in the restricted sense appropriate when the object perceived is still at some distance from the perceiver." And Pike quotes Teresa who "says that the soul *feels the heat* coming from the 'interior depths,'" that is "(we can assume) . . . the most interior of the Seven Mansions." (The analogy is with, e.g., "feeling the heat of a stove which is at some distance from oneself" [Pike 50-51].) But while a feeling of interior warmth often is referred to in connection with the Prayer of Quiet, *is* it a feeling of something at a distance as Pike thinks, or instead just a less intense experience of the burning often felt in Full Union or Rapture?[6]

Augustin Poulain (whom Pike largely follows) implies that the answer is the latter. "That which constitutes the common basis of *all* the degrees of mystic union," *including the Prayer of Quiet* and Full Union "is that of the spiritual impression by which God makes known his presence . . . in the manner . . . of *something interior* which penetrates the soul; it is a sensation of . . . saturation, of immersion," and *can be called "spiritual*

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[5] Though a careful examination of Christocentric mystics like Pierre de Berulle might force one to qualify this claim. See also the Shri Vaishnava theistic mystics' visions of the celestial body of Vishnu.

[6] "Since God is an infinite fire of love, when therefore he is pleased to touch the soul with some severity, the heat of the soul rises to such a degree that the soul believes it is burned with a heat greater than any other in the world. For this reason it speaks of this touch as a burn." The heat in this case is not felt at a distance. Rather, the soul is not only "conscious of the burn, but it has itself become one burn of vehement fire." (John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, trans. E. Allison Peers, Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1962, p. 59.)

touch" (Poulain 90-91, my emphases). Because "it is a question . . . here of a spiritual object *which is not remote*" but "manifests itself by uniting itself with us, dissolving into us as it were," the *appropriate analogy is bodily touch* (Poulain 94, my emphasis).

(2) Is the systematic use of all five perceptual terms typical of Christian mystics generally? Pike's discussion of the spiritual senses reflects his heavy reliance on John of the Cross and especially Teresa. The weight he assigns them isn't unreasonable given the fullness and clarity of their descriptions, their standing in the Roman Catholic community and their importance in the history of Christian mysticism. Their paradigmatic status in Pike's book also has important precedents in the work of Poulain, Albert Farges, Jacques Maritain and others.[7] These mystics and theologians of mysticism aren't fully representative of the Christian mystical tradition as a whole, however.

Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor "do not mention the concept of the 'spiritual senses' at all."[8] Moreover, whereas Karl Rahner and others think we should speak of a doctrine of the spiritual senses "only when these partly figurative, partly literal expressions such as to touch God, the eyes of the heart, etc. are found" integrated in a "complete system" of the "five instruments . . . involved in the spiritual perception of immaterial [religious] realities,"[9] this is much too restrictive.

Many ancient authorities who had important things to say about spiritual perception, did not develop anything amounting to a "complete system" or a body of doctrine of the spiritual senses. In fact most if not all patristic authors, including Origen whom Rahner regards as "the 'founding father' of the spiritual senses tradition, treat the matter casually rather than systematically" (Gavrilyuk, Introduction). Furthermore, there are significant differences between them. "Some ancient authorities" (as well as the 20th century theologian Balthasar) "regard the spiritual senses as purified or transformed versions of the physical senses. Others [e.g., Origen] contrast [them] sharply, emphasizing that the physical senses need to be non-operational in order for the spiritual senses to function

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[7] Poulain and Farges, too, stress the doctrine of the spiritual senses.

[8] Paul Gavrilyuk, "Introduction," *Spiritual Senses: The Perception of God in the History of Western Christian Theology*, op. cit.

[9] Karl Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' according to Origen," in Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16. New York: Seabury Press, 1979, p. 82.

properly" (Gavrilyuk, Introduction). Nor is there a uniform list of the *objects* of the spiritual senses. "God, the eternal Word," the incarnate Word, "spiritual beings such as angels . . . , transcendentals (the good, the true and the beautiful) and other divine attributes," and God's "presence in creation, in the sacraments, in the church, and in scripture" have all been suggested at one time or another (Gavrilyuk, Introduction). All this suggests that Christian accounts of the spiritual senses are too rich and too varied to be usefully reduced to any system.

Moreover, in spite of his insistence on the existence of *five* spiritual senses, Farges himself notes that not all of the spiritual senses are equally prominent[10] in each mystic. Which ones play the leading role in any given case varies "according to the degree of union of each contemplative, and perhaps also with the temperament and character of each" (Farges 284). Take Bonaventure, for instance, who, according to Rahner, has the most fully developed version of the doctrine among the medievals. Sight and hearing relate to the intellect; smell, touch and taste to the will and affections. "The number five" is a bit "arbitrary," however, since "the sense of smell and hearing" are "more or less superfluous for [Bonaventure's] account of spiritual contemplation and its various levels" (Rahner 127). The important concepts for his analysis are spiritual sight, touch, and taste. Sight is a "simple vision (*simplex contuitus*)" whose object is "the immutable first truth" and "its eternal ideas which form the ultimate principles of all creation" (Rahner 116). Taste is "the appreciation by the affections" of the operations of grace in the soul, and is less perfect than feeling or touch which is identified with the ecstatic union of love. While "a direct clear *vision* of God" is essentially reserved for the afterlife, he *can* be directly apprehended by a loving will, and the term "touch" is appropriately used to indicate both the directness and the darkness[11] of this affective union (Rahner 117, 127, my emphasis).[12] [13]

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[10] Or indeed always even evident.

[11] To the intellect.

[12] The accuracy of Rahner's interpretation of Bonaventure has been questioned. For example Mark McInroy argues that Bonaventure thinks that activities of the spiritual senses help make "one *ready* for ecstasy" but do "*not* function in ecstasy itself." (Mark McInroy, from his chapter on Bonaventure in *Spiritual Senses: The Perception of God in Western Christian Theology, op cit.*)

[13] The fact that Poulain, who insists on the existence of five distinct spiritual senses, assimilates (without explicitly identifying) "spiritual taste and a spiritual sense of smell"

In my view, Rahner was correct in concluding that "if one assumes five different faculties which correspond analogically to the bodily powers of sensation, then one is going quite a long way beyond the empirical data [of mysticism]" (Rahner 133). The core of the analogy with bodily perception is the direct "experimental" awareness of a concrete (i.e., non-abstract) and present reality. Our "exterior senses" don't "perceive the essences of the objects around us, but only their presence and their physical effect upon our organs, and perceive these directly." Similarly, the "holy mystics" perceive the presence of God through his effects upon their souls. "Here on earth, the intelligence, except as regards itself and its operation, only apprehends directly the abstract and ideal; the senses alone are able to apprehend concrete and present reality, and" do so "directly." In an analogous way, the spiritual senses directly apprehend God's "concrete and present reality . . . . here is the same firmness and certainty of personal grip, the same ardent fullness of contact, of envelopment and penetration."[14] Note that in this respect, the spiritual senses are not only analogous to the exterior senses, they are analogous to each other.

But to justify the claim that talk of *distinct* spiritual senses of seeing, hearing, smell, touch and taste is not merely "metaphorical and symbolic" but properly analogical, one would have to show that the sort of direct contact involved in each is properly distinct from that involved in the others and that the kind of contact involved in spiritual seeing, for example, is more like that involved in physical seeing than that involved in physical hearing, smell, touch, or taste. To the best of my knowledge no one has come close to doing this.[15]

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to spiritual touch on the grounds that they too "are interpretations of certain shades of union" (Poulain 90) suggests that these categories are more open and fluid than he, Farges and Pike think. At the very least his remarks suggest that spiritual touch, taste, and smell aren't as sharply differentiated from one another as spiritual sight and spiritual hearing are from each other, and as both are from all three forms of the sensation of spiritual contiguity.

[14] Albert Farges, *Mystical Phenomena*, trans. S. P, Jacques from the 2nd French edition. New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: Benziger Bros., 1925, pp. 279-81.

[15] For all of his insistence on the existence of *five* spiritual senses, for example, Farges has not even tried to do this. Poulain does but his discussion is less than fully satisfactory. He says, for example, that spiritual sight is a "mode of [experimental] knowledge . . . that we are instinctively led to compare . . . with bodily sight," (Poulain 89) but he does *not* say

In my opinion, then, the notion of the spiritual senses shouldn't be taken too literally. The metaphors may only have been designed to express intimacy (touch, taste), delight (sweetness, fragrance) and varying degrees of perceptual clarity. (Note that we could then explain why the paradigmatic distance sense, sight, isn't used in association with the Prayer of Quiet. Vision has been traditionally regarded as the most intellectual [and hence clearest] of the senses and one's awareness of God at this stage is relatively obscure.) One should consider the possibility, in other words, that expressions like "sight," "smell," "taste" and so forth refer to only a few phenomenal qualities (the ones I have mentioned perhaps) each of which can be indifferently picked out by more than one perceptual metaphor. What *is* often analogical, however, and *not* merely metaphorical, is the comparison of spiritual perception in general to bodily perception in general.[16]

I conclude that Pike's analysis of the spiritual senses fails because it attempts to fit the language and experiences he discusses into a Procrustean bed which is ill suited to accommodate them.[17] Its biggest lacuna, however, is its failure to address the relevant epistemological issues. Poulain and Farges do, however inadequately. Poulain says, for example, that we have "an experimental knowledge of the presence of God . . . that is the result of an impression, a spiritual sensation of a certain kind" that bears "some resemblance" of an analogous kind to the sensations of the "bodily senses" (Poulain 88). And Farges says something similar. The theory both gesture at is developed most carefully by Jacques Maritain in *Distinguish to Unite, or the Degrees of Knowledge*.[18] Since I have argued elsewhere that the theory in question is inadequate,[19] I would like to turn

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just *how* they are alike. "Spiritual hearing" is said to refer to the direct communication of God's thoughts to the mystic. But (as we have seen in note 13) spiritual smell, taste, and touch are more or less run together.

[16] And note that a number of Christian authors speak of spiritual perception in the singular without implying a specific likeness to any particular one of the bodily senses.

[17] In fairness to Pike, I should note that the fault in question primarily lies with the authors (especially Poulain and Farges) he is relying on.

[18] Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite, or the Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. from the 4th French Edition under the supervision of Gerald B. Phelan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. See especially 247-470.

[19] William J. Wainwright, "Two Theories of Mysticism: Gilson and Maritain," *The Modern Schoolman* 52 (1975): 405-26. Reprinted in William J. Wainwright, *Mysticism:*

to a couple of other models of spiritual sensation which at least at first glance might seem initially more promising.

II. PURITANS AND THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

That conversion involved the bestowal of a new spiritual sense was a Puritan commonplace. In what follows I shall argue that Puritans employ "a sense of the heart" in three different ways. It is often used for a feelingful conviction of gospel truths without any implication of direct or immediate cognitive contact with the divine. But its use more frequently reflects the conviction that a converted heart involves a direct or immediate awareness of God or "holy things." There were at least two models for this. The first is a "Platonic" model which construes the contact as the immediate intuition of a reason thought of as essentially possessing an affective dimension. The second model is sense perception.

While it is often difficult to determine just which of these three senses is intended, I shall argue that the Cambridge Platonist, John Smith

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A Study of its Nature, Cognitive Value, and Moral Implications. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981, pp. 166-84. I continue to stand by the majority of the criticisms of Maritain that I made at that time. For example, Maritain (apparently) presupposes that all *perceptual* experience involves the presence of a quasi-sensible medium *through* which we apprehend that experience's object. He also appears to presuppose that perception can only occur when the perceived object causally acts upon the perceiver. Neither presupposition is self-evident. The first is clearly false if we grant that our immediate awareness of sense impressions and other mental states is a kind of perception. And if occasionalism is logically possible, then the second presupposition is false as well since, on that view, the presence of a physical object provides the occasion on which God produces appropriate sensory effects in the perceiver but isn't their cause. Even so, I am now less inclined to flatly dismiss Maritain's theory than I was in 1975 and 1981. His account of sense perception is at least as plausible as Edwards's Lockean account which I will discuss in section II, and if the Christian mystic *does* become experimentally aware of God's presence through the medium of the effects which God produces in her soul, it is plausible to identify those effects with the consciously experienced effects of infused charity. (For one thing, Christian mysticism is a love mysticism: love is the means of attaining union with God and the union itself is a form of love. For another, the higher stages of contemplation are attained by burying all creatures beneath a "cloud of forgetting." All that remains is the mystic's loving awareness of God. If this awareness involves a medium, it seems that we must identify it with love since love is the only thing other than the awareness itself which hasn't been excluded from her consciousness).

(1616-1652), rather clearly intended the second (a Platonic affect-laden intellectual intuition) while the great American theologian, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), intended the third (a direct cognition modeled on sense perception).

The Puritan's talk of spiritual senses should be placed in the context of devotional practices that were strikingly similar to those of contemporary sixteenth and seventeenth century Roman Catholics. They "knew and used classic Catholic devotional works." Among "the most popular, judging from the number of editions, were the works of St. Augustine, St. Bernard of Clairvaux," and "Thomas a Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* . . . To a large extent, the Puritan devotional literature that blossomed in the early seventeenth century was modeled on earlier Roman Catholic devotional literature." "Continuity" also "existed in the area of techniques . . . Most important was the use of the imagination and the senses in the exercise known as composition of place," i.e., placing oneself within the scenes of the salvation story on which one is meditating.[20]

For Richard Baxter (1615-1691), meditation involved (1) using the sensory images of scripture to visualize (as well as to imaginatively hear, smell, and touch) divine things while at the same time recognizing the images' inadequacy, together with (2) a single minded concentration on the excellences of heaven or other objects of meditation, with the penultimate aim of eliciting and strengthening holy thoughts, desires and feelings, and (like other Puritans) the ultimate aim of achieving "union with Christ, a union that was [typically] expressed in mystically erotic imagery from the Song of Songs and Jesus' parable of the ten virgins" (HS 189).[21]

Regular times were set aside for meditation in a place "free from company and noise," and from other distractions (HS 163). Baxter, for instance, admonishes his reader to "Get thy heart as clear from the world as thou canst. Wholly lay by the thoughts of thy business, troubles, enjoyments, and everything that may take up any room in the soul. Get it as empty as thou possibly canst, that it may be the more capable of being

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[20] Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth Century New England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982, pp. 28-33, 36. Henceforth HS.

[21] The five foolish virgins were sometimes interpreted in the wider tradition as the five bodily senses, and the five wise virgins as the five spiritual senses.

filled with God . . . say to thy worldly business and thoughts, as Christ to his disciples, 'Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder.'"[22]

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance which Puritans placed on these spiritual practices. "Regular secret prayer" was regarded as "the primary and most necessary means" of grace. John Cotton (1584-1652), for example, argued that "the end of preaching" was that one "may learn to pray" (HS 177). Richard Baxter urged that meditation on heaven, i.e., on "the ravishing glory of saints, and the unspeakable excellencies of the God of glory, and the beams that stream from the face of his son" is the "duty by which all other duties are improved, and by which the soul digests truth for its nourishment and comfort." Meditation of this sort involves "the acting of all the powers of the soul," the will and the affections as well as the understanding. For "what the better had we been for odoriferous flowers, if we had no smell . . . or what pleasure should we have found in meats and drinks, without the sense of taste? So what good could all the glory of heaven have done us, or what pleasure should we have had in the perfection of God himself, if we had been without the affections of love and joy?" (Baxter xiii, pp. 1-2).

Prayer brings us to communion with God. Thomas Shepard (1605-1649) said, "I have seen God by reason and never been amazed at God . . . I have seen God himself [in prayer] and have been ravished to behold him" (HS 179). Cotton Mather (1663-1728) spoke of being "inexpressibly irradiated from on high," of being "exceedingly ravished," "raised up into Heaven," of "delights and raptures," and reported an experience in which he was transported "into the Suburbs of Heaven" where he was filled with a "Joy unspeakable and Full of glory. I cannot utter, I may not utter, the Communications of Heaven, whereto I have been this Day admitted: but this I will say, I have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (HS 285f).

But while talk of spiritual senses is common, even pervasive, it is unclear how literally it was intended. Sometimes our authors' language rather strongly suggests that the most appropriate model of spiritual perception is ordinary sense knowledge. Thus Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) asserts that "the spiritual life of a Christian is furnished with spiritual senses. He hath a spiritual eye and a spiritual taste to relish

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[22] Richard Baxter, *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* (abridged), New York: American Tract Society, 1850?; reproduced online by the Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999, chapter xiii, p. 6. Henceforth Baxter.

spiritual things, and a spiritual ear to judge of holy things, and a spiritual feeling. As everyday life, so this excellent life hath senses and motions suitable to it."[23] Or consider the Puritan mystic Francis Rous (1579-1659): "After we have tasted those heavenly things . . . from this taste there ariseth a new, but a true, lively, and experimental knowledge of the things so tasted . . . For even in natural fruits there are certain relishes . . . which nothing but the taste itself can truly represent and shew to us. The West-Indian Piney [pineapple] cannot be so expressed in words, even by him that hath tasted it, that he can deliver over the true shape and character of that taste to another that hath not tasted it."[24]

John Owen (1616-1683) also employs the language of the senses. But when placed in the context of his thought as a whole, his talk of the spiritual senses is arguably a metaphor for an affect-laden intellectual insight or intuition: "the true nature of saving illumination consists in this, that it gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight and prospect into spiritual things as that, in their own spiritual nature, they suit, please and satisfy it, so that it is transformed into them, cast in the mould of them, and rests in them" (Walton 202).

More detailed models of these two ways of understanding spiritual perception are developed by Jonathan Edwards and John Smith, respectively. Consider, first, Edwards.

Because their hearts have been regenerated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the saints love "being in general" (i.e., God and the things that depend on him). Their love of being in general is the basis of a new "spiritual sense" whose "immediate object" is "the beauty of holiness"– a "new simple idea" that can't "be produced by exalting, varying or compounding" ideas "which they had before," and that truly "represents" divine reality.[25]

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[23] Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation, and Heart Religion*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edward Mellon Press, 2002, p. 198. Henceforth Walton.

[24] Quoted in Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992 (originally published by Basil Blackwell, 1946, 2nd ed., 1947), p. 139. Henceforth Nuttall.

[25] Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on the Religious Affections,* 1746: *The Nature of True Virtue*, 1765, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957-2006., vol. 2, pp. 205, 260; vol. 8, p. 622. Henceforth RA and TV, respectively.

Edwards sometimes identified true beauty with the pleasure that holy things evoke in people with spiritual "frames" or "tempers" or with the tendency they have to evoke it. At other times he variously identified it with what he called the "consent of being to being," or the "love of being in general," or "true benevolence" or holiness. His view on the whole appears to be this. True beauty is identical with benevolence or agreement ("consent") in somewhat the same way in which water is identical with H2O or heat with molecular motion. But benevolence is also the objective basis of a dispositional property, namely, a tendency to produce a new simple idea in the savingly converted. This idea is a delight or pleasure in being's consent to being which somehow "represents" or is a "perception" of it. Edwards's account of true beauty thus resembles contemporary Lockean accounts of color or extension. Spiritual delight is a simple idea or sensation like our ideas of color or extension. The dispositional property is a power objects have to produce these ideas in our understandings. Benevolence or the consent of being to being is the objective configuration underlying this power and corresponds to the microstructure of bodies that underlies their tendency to excite ideas of color or extension in minds like ours. Like simple ideas of redness, say, or extension, the new spiritual sensation "represents" or is a "perception" of its object. Just as "red" or "extension" can refer to the idea, the power, or the physical configuration that is the basis of this power, so "true beauty" can refer to the spiritual sensation, to the relevant dispositional property, or to true benevolence.

Edwards called the new mode of spiritual understanding a "sense" because the apprehension of spiritual beauty is (1) non-inferential and (2) involuntary, and Edwards, like Francis Hutcheson, associated sensation with immediacy and passivity. (3) It involves relish or delight, and Edwards followed Locke and Hutcheson in thinking that, like a feeling of tactual pressure or an impression of redness, being pleased or pained is a kind of sensation or perception. Finally, (4) the new mode of understanding is the source of a new simple idea, and Edwards shared Locke's and Hutcheson's conviction that simple ideas come "from experience."

John Smith's model of spiritual perception is rather different. He is no more averse to employing the language of the spiritual senses than Owen. He speaks, for example, of "the senses of the soul," with Plotinus

of an "intellectual touch" of God, and says that "the soul it self hath its sense as well as the body."[26] "There is," he says, "an inward sweetness and deliciousness in divine truth which no sensual mind can taste or relish . . . . Divinity is not so well perceived by subtle wit . . . as by a purified sense, as Plotinus phraseth it" (SD 15).

Smith's spiritual sensation is best thought of as an *intellectual* intuition, however, an act of "that *reason* that is within us" (SD 15). "We must shut the eyes of sense, and open that brighter eye of the *understanding*, that other eye of the soul, as the philosopher calls our *intellectual faculty* . . . the light of the divine world will then begin to fall upon us . . . and in God's own light shall we behold him. The fruit of this knowledge will be sweet to our taste, and pleasant to our palates . . . When *reason* once is raised by the mighty force of the Divine Spirit into a converse with God, it is turned into sense . . . [W]hereas before we conversed with him only. . . with our discursive faculty . . . combating with difficulties, and sharp contests of divers opinions, and laboring . . . in its deductions of one thing from another; we shall then fasten our minds on him . . . with a serene *understanding* . . . such an *intellectual* calmness and serenity, as will present us with a blissful, steady and invariable sight of him." What "before was only faith . . . now becomes vision" (SD 15-16, my emphases).

Yet if Smith's "spiritual sensation" *is* best thought of as an intellectual intuition or perception, why employ the language of the bodily senses? Partly because it was traditional. But primarily, I think, because our familiar senses are apt metaphors for the intuition's directness or immediacy and for its affective overtones.

III. PROSPECTS FOR THE TWO PURITAN MODELS OF SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION

How should Edwards's and Smith's models be assessed? Note first that both are models of spiritual perception *as such*, not of spiritual seeing or hearing or touch or tasting or smell, in particular. I shall argue

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[26] John Smith, *Select Discourses*, London: Printed by F. Flesher for W. Morden, 1660; New York and London: Garland, 1978 (reprint), pp. 5, 3.

that Edwards's model, while more fully developed than Smith's, is less adequate than his.

In the first place, although it is clear *why* Edwards speaks of the new spiritual cognition as a perception or sensation, it is not clear that he *should* have done so. His first two reasons for construing it on the model of bodily sensation are far from conclusive. Our sensations (and the beliefs directly based on them) appear involuntary and immediate, but so too does our recognition of the fact that 2+2=4. Passivity and immediacy aren't peculiar to ideas derived from (internal or external) sensation.

The other two considerations carry more weight. Locke and Hutcheson identified reason with reasoning. Reason is sharply distinguished from the will and its affections and from the senses. Its sole function is to manipulate ideas received from other sources. Edwards sometimes indicates that he shares these views. Reason does not have an affective dimension and is not the source of new simple ideas. The cognition of true beauty, on the other hand, has an affective dimension since it involves relish or delight, and its object is a new simple idea. If these considerations are sound, then it seems that spiritual cognition should be construed as a kind of sensation or perception.

Edwards's account of spiritual perception is subject to some of the same difficulties as Locke's account of sense perception.[27] But it is also subject to a difficulty of its own. If I am right, the idea of true beauty is both a kind of delight or relish *and* an apparent cognition. Can something be both? It isn't sufficient to argue that perceptions of objectively real value properties can be inherently affective (and thus pleasurable or painful), for Edwards doesn't think of pleasure and pain in this way. Pleasures and pains in his (and Locke's and Hutcheson's) view aren't qualities or affective dimensions of more complex experiences. They are discrete internal sensations. But if pleasure *is* a kind of internal thrill or delight, how can it *also* be a true "representation" of something existing "without" (TV 622-23)? Ordinary pleasures and pains differ from visual or auditory impressions in lacking what Berkeley called "outness;" they don't seem to point beyond themselves. Either spiritual pleasure is radically unlike ordinary pleasure in this respect or it isn't an apparent cognition.

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[27] It isn't clear that the mind's immediate objects are ideas, how these ideas represent or resemble their objects, and so on.

Edwards implicitly addresses this issue by attempting to show that "the frame of mind, or inward sense . . . whereby the mind is disposed to" relish true benevolence for its spiritual beauty agrees "with the necessary nature of things" (TV 620). The "frame of mind" in question, however, is benevolence itself. Hence, if we can show that benevolence has a foundation in the nature of things, we can conclude that the spiritual sense, too, is aligned with reality. Edwards has several arguments to show that it does,[28] but his most interesting is perhaps this.

In Edwards's view, "the Spirit of God . . . communicates and exerts itself in the soul [of the saints] in those acts which are its [God's] proper, natural, and essential acts in itself *ad intra*." "The act which is [the Deity's] nature, and wherein its being consists in . . . is divine love," however.[29] This explains how the saints' benevolence is grounded in the nature of things. If the love of the saints just *is* God's love, and God's love is the Holy Spirit, then the benevolence of the saints is an act of the infinite and omnipotent benevolence which lies at the heart of reality.[30]

Another problem isn't so easily overcome, though. That spiritual cognition is best thought of as a kind of sensation or perception on the model of bodily seeing, hearing, tasting and the like, seems inconsistent with other aspects of Edwards's position. A number of Hutcheson's critics took exception to his moral sense theory because they believed that (1) at least some moral propositions are necessarily true, and that (2) necessary truths are discerned by reason.[31] Hutcheson maintained that the moral sense grasps the goodness of benevolent actions and dispositions, that is, perceives that benevolence is (morally) good. His critics objected that "Benevolence is good" is *necessarily* true, and that

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[28] Four of them are offered in the final chapter of *The Nature of True Virtue*. For a discussion of them, see my *Reason and the Heart*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995, pp. 34-38.

[29] Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 471," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 13. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, p. 513.

[30] While Edwards normally insists on identity or something close to it, a sufficiently close resemblance relation might itself be enough to explain why true benevolence is grounded in the nature of things. If the saints' loving actions and temper mirror God's action and temper, then their benevolence is appropriately related to objective reality because it resembles or is an image of it. Nature's activity on Edwards's occasionalist view is really God's activity. Love is thus "natural" because it imitates the action of nature itself.

[31] See, for example, the correspondence between Hutcheson and Gilbert Burnet.

necessary truths are apprehended by *reason*, not sense. It is therefore significant that Edwards, too, apparently believed that basic moral truths are necessary.[32] Nor is he likely to have thought that the connection between benevolent actions and dispositions and spiritual beauty is only contingent – that holiness or benevolence might not have been truly beautiful. But if "holiness is beautiful" *is* necessarily true, Edwards seems committed to the implausible view that our knowledge of at least some necessary truths is derived from a sense, i.e., that some necessary truths are perceived by a kind of sensation. It is important to note that the problem here does not arise from Edwards's use of a peculiarly neo-Lockean model of bodily perception. Because the physical senses can't apprehend necessary truths, it would arise from *any* use of models of bodily perception.[33]

One could avoid this problem as well as the one raised earlier by interpreting spiritual cognition as an intellectual intuition with affective

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[32] Edwards clearly thought that at least some moral truths are necessary. See his *Freedom of the Will* (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 153. His example is, "It is . . . fit and suitable, that men should do to others, as they would that they should do to them." It is worth observing that Locke, too, thought that basic moral truths are necessary.

[33] Including those of Poulain, Farges and Maritain. One might protest that the objection cuts against Maritain only if "experimental knowledge" of God, on his view, incorporates a belief in necessary truths, and that it does so is doubtful. For, in the first place, it isn't clear that the experimental knowledge of God incorporates propositional knowing, and even if it does, it is far from obvious that the propositions known are necessary truths. This doubt is reinforced by the fact that the medium through which the mystic apprehends God, on Maritain's view, (namely, the consciously experienced effects of infused charity) are more closely analogous to the sensory effects of physical objects on our bodily senses than to the concepts through which we grasp abstract objects and which we incorporate in propositions. But while the passive reception of the sensory effects of physical objects may be a *necessary* condition of perceptual knowledge, it isn't sufficient. For example, perceptual knowledge of the table I am looking at requires my recognition *that* the object I am experiencing is a table. Similarly here. The knowledge in question is an experimental knowledge of God only if the subject is at least implicitly aware that "the Divine Reality" is "present within us" in virtue of its action upon the soul (Maritain, op. cit., p. 272). The mystic's experience thus *does* incorporate propositional knowledge. Moreover, if the propositions known entail that God exists (as they surely must for Maritain, since "God is present in my soul" entails "God exists"), and "God exists" is a necessary truth as the tradition arguably maintains, then Maritain's account of the mystic's experimental knowledge of God is exposed to the same sort of objection as Edwards's.

overtones in the manner of Smith. A view like Smith's sidesteps the two most pressing problems confronting Edwards – how a feeling of delight can also be an apparent cognition, and how a necessary truth can be grasped by a kind of sensation. It sidesteps them because (1) on Smith's view, the "sensation" or "feeling" isn't the cognition itself but, rather, its accompaniment or (better) its affective dimension or resonance, and because (2) there is no mystery[34] in necessary truths and "platonic" entities such as numbers, universals, archetypes and values, being objects of intellectual intuition.

But while I find Smith's model more promising, it clearly needs further development. If I am right, Smith employed the language of the spiritual senses because it was familiar and because ordinary sense perception provides an apt metaphor for the intuition's directness or immediacy and affective overtones. Other analogies are at least as apt, however, and should be explored further. The spiritual cognition's directness, for example, is strikingly similar to our immediate recognition of the *prima facie* rightness of an instance of justice or kindness on a view like W. D. Ross's, or our immediate acquaintance with numbers, universals, values and other so-called "platonic" entities on the views of a number of contemporary epistemologists. Nor are intellectual intuitions always affectless. Kant's respect for the moral law is the affective resonance of the recognition of its obligatoriness in rational beings with inclinations, while classical Platonists thought that reason itself has an affective dimension. Knowing the good involves loving it, delighting in it and putting it into practice – a view which Smith shared. ("Intellectual life, as [the Platonists] phrase it" is a non-discursive "knowledge . . . [that] is always pregnant with divine virtue, which ariseth out of an happy union of souls with God, and is nothing else but a living imitation of a Godlike perfection drawn out by a strong fervent love of it. This divine knowledge . . . makes us amorous of Divine beauty . . . and this divine love and purity, reciprocally exalts divine knowledge" [SD 20].)

The immediate task for those interested in Smith's model of spiritual perception is thus a close examination of the classical Platonists' account of our knowledge of the forms, the Good and the One, and contemporary literature on the epistemology of intuition in (e.g.) logic and mathematics,

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[34] Or at least, less mystery.

ethics and philosophy. If one or more of these accounts is defensible, so too, I suspect, will be Smith's.

It may also be useful to examine similar conceptions in other theistic traditions such as Vaishnavism.[35] Nammalvar sings of the Lord swallowing him, for example: "The Lord abides in [his] heart, and when it melts, swallows it."[36] "He who seized me came, the other day/ and ate my life./ Day after day, he comes, and devours me so fully./ Was that the day that I became his servant?" (9.6.8). Or again, "He ate my life fully and was filled./ He became all worlds and all life/ . . . and he then became just for me, honey, milk, syrup, [and] nectar" (10.7.2) (CN 168f., 172f.).

But then, as the last line implies, the poet *also* swallows the Lord "who is beyond all senses and thought" (CN 160). He "entered my heart filling it./ I have obtained my love ["and contain him"]. I ate the nectar, and rejoiced" (10.8.6) (CN 173). "The Tamil word for 'nectar' . . . is *amutu* (from the Sanskrit *amrta*, the substance that gives immortality) and the phrase 'nectar of the mouth' is used to mean kissing." Thus the poet, speaking as one of the god's female lovers (*gopis*) exclaims "Embrace my beautiful breasts/ with the fragrance of the wild jasmine/ on your radiant chest./ Give me the nectar of your mouth" (10.3.5). "*Amutu* also means 'food' and enjoyment" (CN 170-71). The upshot is that the poet and the Lord include one another. And as in the West, this mutual union or embrace between God and his devotee is expressed by images of taste, touch and smell. Another interesting example is the following.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavas who identify ultimate reality with Krishna[37] believe it is revealed "in the form of a cosmic drama," known as the Krishna-lila. The heart of this drama is the love play between Krishna and the female cowherds (*gopis*) whose story is told in the *Bhagavata Purana*. The purpose of this revelation "is to provide humans with a model of, and for, perfection."[38] This model centrally includes passion which Jiva

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[35] Vaishnavas are monotheists, and describe God (Vishnu) as omniscient, omnipotent, and all loving.

[36] John Carman and Vasudha Narayanan, *The Tamil Veda: Pillan's Interpretation of the Tiruvaymoli.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 166. Henceforth CN.

[37] For many Vaishnavas, Krishna is the principle avatara („descent" or „bodily" manifestation) of Vishnu.

[38] David L. Haberman, *Action as a Way of Salvation: A Study of Raganuga Bhakti*

Gosvamin (fl. 1555-1600) defines as an instance of "that love which consists of an immense desire of a subject for union with the object of its desire," and which Rupa (fl. 1495-1550) claims provides the "highest access" to Krishna (Haberman 70).

The devotee internalizes the stories of Krishna by identifying with one of Krishna's companions, thereby attempting to transform his or her identity. The *anubhavas* are the "spontaneous and natural [external] expressions" of the characters' "inner emotions." By imitating, or taking on, the actions of one of the characters in the story, the devotee hopes to "obtain the salvific emotions of that character and [thus] come to inhabit the world [namely, *Vraja*] in which that character resides" (Haberman 69f).

To explain more fully: According to Gaudiya Vaishnavism, "the body . . . is the house of the soul or self (*atman*). Identity is what locates the self in a particular body which resides in a particular world. To participate in the world of *Vraja*," for example, "one must occupy a body located in that world. And to accomplish this one must develop an identity which connects one to such a body . . . Salvation in Gaudiya Vaishnavism" should therefore "be seen as the shift of identity from the external . . . body" of ordinary life "to [one's] true body which is similar" to that of the exemplary character whose actions one is imitating (Haberman 73).

Since "amorous emotion [*madhura-bhava*] . . . contains the essence of all other emotions," it "is perfectly represented by . . . the female lovers of Krishna, . . . the *gopis* of *Vraja*." Imitation of amorous bhakti (i.e., loving devotion) is thus modeled on the *gopis*. It is "divided into two types." The first involves "the desire for *direct* . . . enjoyment" and sexual union "with Krishna" (my emphasis), and therefore consists in identifying oneself with one of Krishna's female lovers. The second involves a "desire to share in the special emotions" of one of the female *companions or attendants* of his lovers (usually a companion of Radha, Krishna's favorite *gopi*), and thus to *vicariously* share in the latter's amorous passion (Haberman 81-85).

What particularly interests me is that salvation, on this view, involves the acquisition of a "perfected body" whose characteristics mirror, while transcending and transforming, those of one's "earthly" body. If

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Sadhana. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 45. Henceforth Haberman.

one's perfected body *does* mirror one's earthly body, however, it must possess analogues of our physical senses. What one would like, therefore, is a more detailed account of just how these analogues of our physical senses function, and the ways in which they resemble and differ from the latter – models that play a role similar to those of Maritain or Jonathan Edwards or John Smith, for example. Doing so would potentially shed further light on the tradition of the spiritual senses which has been the subject of this article.

I CALLED TO GOD FROM A NARROW PLACE...
A WIDE FUTURE FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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Abstract. I urge philosophers of religion to investigate far more vigorously than they have until now the acceptability of varied components of the world religions and their epistemological underpinnings. By evaluating "acceptability" I mean evaluation of: truth, morality, spiritual efficacy and human flourishing, in fact any value religious devotees might think significant to their religious lives. Secondly, I urge that philosophers of religion give more attention to what scholars have called the "esoteric" level of world religions, including components of strong ineffability, weak ineffability, and an alleged perennial philosophy. All this should involve a cooperative effort between analytic, comparative, and feminist philosophy of religion.

PREFACE

I was born to and raised in a traditional Jewish family in Detroit, Michigan. As a child, my deepest impression of Christianity was as a dark, sinister, threatening force. It started with our devout Christian downstairs landlady when I was playing out in front of the house at the age of five. She lured me to her door and gave me a piece of bacon. She closed the door and watched gleefully from a window as I ate it. I thought it was rather tasty but not terrific. Terrific it wasn't when I told my parents of the event. Whenever we made any bit of noise upstairs over her head, this Christian lady would bang hard on her ceiling with the stick end of her broom to demand silence. Clearly, a Christian suppression of the Jews!

On one Sunday afternoon car ride, my father pointed out to me an impressive church where, he said, a woman had been murdered that very Christmas eve. Menacing. Soon after there were the churches that

displayed – right outside in front – a kind of a statue of a man who had died after obviously being savagely tortured. Now, let me ask you – if a dress shop displays dresses out front and a shoe shop displays shoes, what must this shop be up to? You guessed it: this was a place where they brought people to be tortured and murdered. Then there were the stories in my Jewish school about priests who long ago, in Eastern Europe, would kidnap sweet Jewish children, like me, who were never to be found again; stories about the Spanish Inquisition and expulsion of the Jews from Spain, and the Christian pogroms; and in Detroit, Father Charles Edward Coughlin's Sunday radio broadcasts accusing the Jews both of being the chief communists *and* of being the chief capitalistic pigs (excuse the expression from someone who has eaten bacon only once.)[1]

Those childhood impressions still lie very deep inside me, even after these many years of knowing many wonderful Christians, having read wise and spiritually enriching Christian thought, and even spending a year at the home of the Fighting Irish.[2] But these later experiences have greatly diminished my apprehension to the point where I can appreciate much in Christianity, although I believe that Jesus was neither the Messiah nor divine, and although I have no opinion on whether the Spirit proceeds directly from the Father alone or also through the Son.

I write what follows, then, as a person who in the United States lived in a religious minority that historically the majority religion had persecuted. And I write this as a person who in the country in which I now reside, Israel, is part of a religious majority that must act with respect to its Islamic, Christian, Druze, and Circassian religious minorities. What I seek is more emphasis on an honest assessment of the acceptability of beliefs and practices across the world religions including various "levels" of religious understanding and practice. Moreover, I seek doing this in a way that encourages overall respect and even appreciation of the good motivations and fruits of a religion where that is possible, even when judging some elements of that religion unacceptable.

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[1] Although the broadcasts ended at the time of my birth so I never heard them, the Jews of Detroit were still "hearing" them for many years beyond.

[2] This is an esoteric reference to the University of Notre Dame, a splendid Catholic university in Indiana.

INTRODUCTION

In his monumental *Twentieth-Century Western Philosophy of Religion 1900-2000,* Eugene Long divides the discipline at the end of the twentieth century into five categories: analytic philosophy, hermeneutics and deconstruction, critical theory, comparative philosophy, and feminist philosophy.[3] In what follows, I focus on analytic philosophy, comparative philosophy, and feminist philosophy, areas I know more about than the others on Long's list. So, when I write below about philosophy of religion I will always mean the discipline as represented by those three subdivisions.

I urge philosophers of religion, first, to investigate far more vigorously than they have until now the *acceptability* of varied components of the world religions, as well as their epistemological underpinnings in what scholars have called "exoteric" religion. By evaluating "acceptability" I mean evaluation of: *truth, morality, spiritual efficacy and human flourishing*, in fact any value religious devotees might think significant to their religious lives. Secondly, I want to urge that philosophers of religion give more attention to a comprehensive inquiry across world religions into what scholars have called "esoteric" religion. This should include not only testing the claim, sometimes made quite forcefully, that religions are identical or at least very close to one another at this level. Also, the various "esoteric" forms of religion should be tested for their inner coherence and acceptability. In short, I propose a dialectic between evaluating the contents of the world religions and investigating with philosophical acumen and integrity the possibilities of closer agreement between religions. All this should include a cooperative effort between analytic, comparative, and feminist philosophy of religion.

Now, in proposing these undertakings I am not so naïve as to expect that philosophers will solve many issues with anything like a consensus. (I take to heart Peter van Inwagen's keen observation that in philosophy very little ever gets settled.[4]) Nonetheless, philosophers of religion can

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[3] Eugene Long, *Twentieth-Century Western Philosophy of Religion 1900-2000* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000).

[4] Peter van Inwagen, "Is It Wrong Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone to Believe Anything on Insufficient Evidence?" in *Philosophy: The Big Questions*, Ruth J. Sample, Charles W. Mills, and James P. Sterba, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 87-98.

make progress in their discipline in a number of ways: (1) By reaching a consensus or coming near to one wherever possible, (2) By deepening and clarifying for (at least) one's own self, to then recommend to others, the ranking of elements in the world religions regarding their truth and other values of acceptability, (3) By getting to the bottom of and assessing the epistemologies of different religions, and (4) By assessing a philosopher's understanding of the implications of other world religions from the vantage point of her own religion. For example, this would be for a Christian philosopher to go beyond defending Christian belief, to evaluate, say, Shaivism (the worship of Shiva in India) with the tools for evaluation provided by her own brand of Christianity.

Here I am reminded of Alvin Plantinga's "Advice to Christian philosophers." There he writes that, "The Christian community . . . ought to get on with the project of exploring and developing the implications of Christian theism for the whole range of questions philosophers ask and answer."[5] Christian philosophers have the right, avers Plantinga, to wield their own perspectives on philosophical issues. This, I urge, should apply to Christian philosophers, as well as to members of other religions, namely, to consider the content as well as the fact of the very existence of other religions from their religious view. (I would add that in such an undertaking the philosopher of religion is not to be protected *a priori* from coming to see serious problems within his own religion.)

One should not confuse my proposals that include evaluating "other" religions, with the position that when faced with religious diversity a follower of one religion is obligated to consider the justification of his own religious adherence. My proposals pertain to philosophers of religion, religious and atheist alike, *acting as philosophers*. And even when I urge acting, say, *qua* Christian philosophers, as in point (3) above, I do not believe they are obligated to do so in virtue of following one religion when aware of the variety of world religions.[6]

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[5] Alvin Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," *Faith and Philosophy*, (1984) 1, 253-271.

[6] Indeed, I have argued that no such obligation exists, at least not across the board. See: Jerome Gellman, "Religious Diversity and the Epistemic Justification of Religious Belief," *Faith and Philosophy* 10, (1993), pp. 45-364. (Reprinted in *Philosophy of Religion, The Big Questions* eds. Michael Murray and Eleonore Stump (Oxford, Blackwell: 1999), pp. 441-453. And: Jerome Gellman, "In Defense of a Contented Exclusivist," *Religious*

What was once a global village has since become a global apartment house.[7] No longer in the West is it only Christian denominations facing skeptics whom they wish to turn aside. Christians are no longer ensconced in a cocoon-like mutually supportive religious culture for which Hindus and Sikhs are exotic pictures that show up in travelogues. Western Christian analytic philosophers journey for long stays in China, and the Association of Christian Philosophers holds a conference in Hong Kong attended by Chinese, American, European, and Israeli analytic philosophers. We are now progressively intertwined with one another, and exposed in the mass media and on the street to one another's religions. The issues that arise for many people today, for example Christians, are beyond skeptical assaults on Christianity and Christian apologetics, and beyond attempts to reform Christianity in light of its alleged moral failures. There is much uncertainty and confusion out there about what the world religions "really" mean to teach, and what, if anything, in various religions is acceptable. While knowing similarities and differences is crucial, obviously it is not sufficient for trying to calm the noise coming through the thin walls from the neighboring apartments inside our creaking, tottering, apartment building. Philosophers of religion should take up the challenge into the center of the discipline.

SOME SETTING UP

The Exoteric and Esoteric

To set this all up I begin with "exoteric" and "esoteric." The Oxford dictionary defines "exoteric" as "Designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples; communicated to outsiders, intelligible to the public," and "esoteric" as "Designed for, or appropriate to, an inner circle of advanced or privileged disciples; communicated to, or intelligible by, the initiated exclusively." This distinction has turned blurry since in many Western circles these labels are not as valid as they were. Increasingly what used to be esoteric in religion has become known and popularized beyond

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Studies, 36 (2000), 401-417. (Reprinted in *Readings in Philosophy of Religion: East Meets West*, ed. Andrew Eshleman, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 374-383.)

[7] I owe this felicitous turn of phrase to Evan Fales.

an inner circle of enthusiasts. Witness, for example, the popularity of religious mysticism, which once was a carefully restricted religious domain. Nowadays, much that used to be esoteric has spilled over to become far more known and appreciated.[8] I am interested only in the respective *components* of what were once considered two realms separated by the number and status of their adherents. And my interest includes only components of esoteric traditions that interpret exoteric beliefs and practices. I exclude aberrant ideas and practices that followers keep secret, like magic and astrology, in the service of religion.

In order to denote only the components without ascribing the Oxford Dictionary's meanings, in what follows I will write "Exoteric" and "Esoteric" with a capital "e" for the religious content itself that used to be relatively clearly exoteric and esoteric, not for what we can properly describe today as "exoteric" and "esoteric," with a small case "e." I realize that the lines between even Exoteric and Esoteric are not clearly drawn and that to speak of just two realms is a gross simplification. But I am in the business of making some proposals and for that purpose my rough and ready distinction between Exoteric and Esoteric will do fine.

Exoteric religion, then, pertains to what used to be the domain of plain, and even most fancy, educated folk, and largely remains so. In theistic religions this would include belief in a God distinct from the world and conceived in an anthropomorphic way or else in a fashion much analogous to us, having power, knowledge, goodness and the like but supremely heightened in form and degree. In a non-theistic religion, like Buddhism, for another example, this would include taking the dharma teachings of Buddha about no-self, karma, enlightenment, interdependent co-arising, etc. at face value, as literal metaphysical truths. And in all religions this would include having a conception of religious behavior and of ritual appropriate to the beliefs and the concomitant religious aims of Exoterism.

In the Esoteric area I focus on three types, which involve some overlap yet are different enough to warrant individual attention:

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[8] Indeed, several modern day kabbalists insist on teaching hitherto esoteric teachings of kabbalah in Judaism to the masses if the Messiah is to come. As a result, kabbalah is now popular well beyond an inner circle of Jewish kabbalists.

Strong Ineffability

The great third century Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna once wrote, "There is no dharma whatsoever taught by the Buddha to whomever, whenever, wherever."[9] This statement flatly contradicts the Buddhist belief in the Three Jewels of: the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. How could the devout Nagarjuna deny one of the Three Jewels? The answer lies in the Mahayana *Lankavatara Sutra* and *Shurangama Sutra*. The *Lankavatara Sutra* portrays the Buddha as saying, "All the teachings in the Sutras are fingers pointing to the moon." And in the *Shurangama Sutra* the Buddha says,

> If someone uses a finger to point out the moon to another person, if that person takes the finger to be the moon, he will not only fail to see the moon, but he will also fail to see the finger. He mistakes the pointing finger for the bright moon."[10]

To say the Buddha *had* "teachings," i.e., *linguistically conveyed statements meant to be true*, would be to fasten onto the teachings themselves, study them, and apply them, as end points. This would be to fasten on to the finger. It would be to miss the moon, that which the Buddha could never teach because it is ineffable, but to which he was always pointing.

There is a Zen story that at Vulture Peak (Grdhrakuta) Buddha gave a dharma talk consisting entirely of his holding a flower and twirling it in his fingers. One monk's (Mahakapahsa's) smile indicated that he had understood the revelation.[11]

And the *Tao Te Ching* begins with the words, "Even the finest teaching is not the Tao itself. Even the finest name is insufficient to define it. Without words, the Tao can be experienced, and without a name, it can be known."[12]

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[9] Nagarjuna, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, Nagarjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* Jay L. Garfield, tr. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), chapter 25.

[10] *The Shurangama Sutra* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003), p. 30.

[11] *Zen Flesh Zen Bones, A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings*, compiled by Paul Reps and Nyogen Senkazi (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1998), pp. 121-122.

[12] Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Translated by Stan Rosenthal (Shi-tien Roshi), Available at: http://www.vl-site.org/taoism/ttcstan2.html.

In the case of strong ineffability, there are no teachings because whatever is said is cancelled out, having the function only of pointing to what is ineffable. Exoteric religion points to the moon and has value for those who cannot (yet) see as far as that.

Weak Ineffability

In this form of Esoterism, there do exist teachings. What is said is not cancelled out, but remains true, however, what is *referred* to is something ineffable. I have in mind the *via negativa*, or "apophatic theology." In Christianity this is perhaps most identified with Pseudo-Dionysius, and later with the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. In Judaism it is most identified with Maimonides and forms of kabbalah. In Maimonides' version, the *via negativa*, maintains that God is indescribable with positive attributes. However, all negative attributions to God, denials of positive attributes, are true. Statements ascribing positive attributes to God are category mistakes and in Esoterism undergo translation into negative statements. So, what one says in negative theology about God is true, but the theology *points* to an ineffable God. As with Maimonides, while the positive beliefs about God of standard religion are false, they are necessary for the religious life. (*Guide for the Perplexed* 3: 28)[13]

We need to distinguish the *via negativa* from a different form of unsaying belonging to the category of strong ineffability. In this form, which you can find in Zen for example, one is to deny, in sequence, each statement one makes in an endless chain, so that every statement remains "unsaid." In this form of negation, the denial of a denial does not return us to a positive statement, but only provides the next statement to deny.[14]

The Perennial Philosophy

The term "perennial philosophy" is an old one. Various scholars, including Ananda Coomaraswamy, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Frithjof Schuon and Huston Smith, have revived the claim that all (or nearly all) religions have a common Esoteric "perennial philosophy" (PP), distinct

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[13] Maimonides does say that our silence is most befitting God. That is with regard to speaking of God in positive attributes. The negative attributions remain true.

[14] See Thich Nhat Hanh, *Zen Keys* (Doubleday: New York, 1974), chapter 5.

from Exoteric religion. [15] PP has these metaphysical and epistemological components (greatly simplified and boiled down):

(PP1) A monistic metaphysics in which there exists an infinite Reality (my term) that is the only true reality (hence, "absolute").

(PP2) The Reality is neither personal nor impersonal, being beyond these categories.

(PP3) The Reality constantly infuses the world with grace, drawing us to the consciousness of our true being resting within the Reality.

(PP4) There is a universal human intuition of the existence of the Reality as the one true reality.

(PP5) Our worldly existence masks and distorts this intuition.

(PP6) It is possible to retrieve this consciousness, to become transformed by overcoming the sense of separateness from the Reality and orientation toward a separate ego.

(PP7) PP in various versions provides methods and disciplines for realizing life transformed (resulting from the reinterpretation of Exoteric practices and beliefs).

PP converts "ordinary" religious statements (the finger) into PP talk (the moon), on the grounds that the former arise from within the depths of one's soul where the universal intuition lies, only to be distorted on the way up. For example, that God is creator *ex nihilo* points to the truth that nothing exists but the Reality. And that God is morally good is based on a correct intuition of the Reality's metaphysical "goodness," in the constant flow of grace from the Reality. This intuition however, manifests in Exoterism masked by a concept of goodness informed by self-interest.

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[15] For the bibliography of Coomaraswamy's works see: *Ananda K.Coomaraswamy: Bibliography and Index*, Rama P. Coomaraswamy, ed. (Berwick-upon-Tweed: Prologos Books, 1988). For the bibliography of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, see *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, L.E. Hahn, R.E. Auxier, and L. W. Stone, Jr., eds. (Peru, Ill.: Open Court, 2001), part 3. The bibliography of Frithjof Schuon is available at: http://www.frithjofschuon.info/public/writings/bibliography.aspx. Of Huston Smith's many books the following are the most central to my concerns here: Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth: The Common Vision of the World's Religions* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), *The Religions of Man* (New York: Perennial Library, 1989), and *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991).

We need to distinguish PP from its cousin, John Hick's Pluralistic Hypothesis (PH) in which the "Real" is the actual goal of all religious practice.[16] Here are some salient differences:

1. In PH the Real is distinct from the world, while in PP the Reality is not.
2. PH does not attempt to translate ordinary religious talk into the argot of PH, while PP provides an isomorphic transform-scheme for at least core standard pronouncements.
3. PH is a hypothesis *about* religions, not claiming that any religion tradition has endorsed it. PP-ers, on the contrary, claim PP to exist within and to be an important part of almost all religious traditions.
4. PH is not interested to judge the truth or falsity of any Exoteric religious doctrine, concentrating instead on how these are employed with reference to the Real. PP, on the other hand, judges standard beliefs as not quite true, yet reflecting deep truths, existing in PP.

SO LET'S START (FINALLY)

Now for my suggested program for philosophy of religion in the twenty-first century. My interest is to broaden topics in philosophy of religion and bring them cooperatively from the sides to the center. My program pertains to the Exoteric, to the Esoteric, and to the relationship between them in the world religions.

THE EXOTERIC

Religions are starkly inconsistent with one another in their Exoteric doctrines, in the explanations they give of important facts, and in what they expect their devotees to be doing with their time. Rather than ignore these

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[16] John Hick has expounded this view in many books and articles. See John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). For a not-quite-up-to-date bibliography of his writing, see David Cheetham, *John Hick: A Critical Introduction and Reflection* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003).

inconsistencies or pretend that they are not significant to religious devotees, philosophers should engage in evaluating the acceptability of major components of the world religions. I am talking about evaluations across world religions, both evaluating major religious components of a single religion by itself as well as evaluating religions relative to one another.

In addition, philosophers should investigate different religions for what sort of epistemologies they embrace. The late William Jellema, of Calvin College, taught, so I have been told, that Christians had a different concept of "rationality" than other folks. Do religions really differ over their understanding of rationality? Philosophers of religion should investigate and evaluate the epistemologies that go along with various religions.

So, here is a sampling of the kind of topics I have in mind for the philosophy of religion of Exoterism:

1. Enlightenment: Various religions, Eastern religions in particular, emphasize reaching enlightenment, variously interpreted; a permanent state of a person who is then forever released from his/her former condition. Is this a realistic possibility for mere mortals or are we caught in what Judaism calls "*ritzo v'shov*," moving back and forth between a higher and a lower spiritual state, never reaching constancy in this life? In addition, what are the implications of ascribing enlightenment to a person for the creation and protection of authority and control?

2. No-Self: Buddhism teaches that there is no self. Hindu religions teach there is a self, but it is identical with Brahman, not a separate entity. Exoteric Christianity teaches the existence of a separate self, as do Judaism and Islam. Historically in Western philosophy, the issue of the existence of the self revolved around Hume's rejection of its existence. Philosophers of religion, with some outstanding exceptions, have not sufficiently addressed the issue in the context of the diversity of religions.[17]

3. Evil: The problem of evil has been around quite a long time. Philosophers should examine treatments of evil in both theistic and non-theistic religions. This should include such issues as these: How consistent is an explanation of evil to the religious scheme in

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[17] See below for an important exception. William Wainwright has also touched on this in William J. Wainwright, *Mysticism, A Study of its Nature, Cognitive Value, and Moral Implications* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

which it is offered? Does it solve the problem in logical terms? How does a particular treatment of evil fare in moral terms? How do non-theistic treatments fare against theistic ones?

4. Divine Reversal: Christianity used to claim, and part of it continues to claim, that it supersedes Judaism: God had made a covenant with the Israelites described as "for ever." (Exodus 31:16) Then, God annulled those commandments in favor of "circumcision of the heart." (Romans 2:28) Could God change His mind like that? The Jewish philosopher Saadia Gaon (882-942) argued that God could not do so (despite many biblical passages apparently to the contrary). This forced him to novel interpretations of the sacrifice of Isaac, where apparently God first issues and then annuls a commandment to Abraham. Can God have a change of mind? If God cannot change His mind, did God utter a falsehood at the start when giving a command "for ever"?

5. The Fact of Religious Diversity: There exists a multitude of religions in our world, some claiming hundreds of millions of followers. Each religion should be able to explain that fact convincingly from its own point of view. Why do only the people of India know about worshipping Vishnu, Shiva, and Krishna? If the Jews are God's chosen people, why do the religions of the majority of people on earth not know of them or know almost nothing about them? Which religion(s) best explain the variety and great number of religions and the immense number of followers in religions other than its/their own?

6. Devotee non-Fidelity: In the history of some religions, the most ardent believers and the religious hierarchy have had rather bleak histories of practicing what the religion teaches. It does not follow, of course, that the religion is false. However, a religion should be able to give a good explanation of how it was that its teachings were not compelling enough to create a responsible leadership that implemented its teachings. How do different religions fare in giving such explanations, and how do religions fare relative to one another?[18]

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[18] This divides into two: (1) How do religious explanations fare with regard to scientific or quasi-scientific ones, and (2) How does a religion fare in its own terms in giving an explanation, in comparison to other religions.

7. Sexuality: Religions have varied ways of thinking about human sexuality. Some endorse celibacy as an ideal way of life. Others think it an obligation to have children. Some think of "carnal knowledge" as an untidy affair they tolerate as unavoidable. Others don't make much of a fuss about sexuality. Still others see sexual intercourse as part of the way to enlightenment. In light of what we now know of sexuality through science, with new moral insights and in light of the wide failure of celibacy in some religions, which attitudes to sexuality are now the most acceptable? How valid are the various rationales for particular attitudes?

8. A Harsh God: In the Hebrew Bible (The "Old Testament"), God appears at times as a harsh being quite at odds with the idealized picture of God in some of later Judaism and Christianity. In the Quran as well God can be quite harsh. How well do religions deal with this fact? Does any religion do better than others? [19]

9. Epistemology: Do different religions have different epistemologies? If they do, which are acceptable? Which are more acceptable than others?[20]

A recent paradigm of the kind of undertaking I am advocating is *Buddhism, A Christian Exploration and Appraisal,* a cooperative study by Keith Yandell, an analytic philosopher with a keen interest in Buddhism and Harold Netland, professor of philosophy of religion and intercultural studies.[21] In this work the authors present a balanced and edifying presentation of the history of Buddhism from Siddartha Gautama the Buddha until the "Dharma comes West," (a nice play on the words of

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[19] Recently, two books have appeared on this topic: Paul Copan has written a Christian theology of the Old Testament addressing that issue. See: Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011). A collection of essays is Michael Bergmann, Michael J. Murray, and Michael C. Rea, eds. *Divine Evil? The Moral Character of the God of Abraham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See my forthcoming review in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion.*

[20] The criteria of evaluation will include meta-epistemological principles (such as what any epistemology must account for) as well as whatever epistemology a group of philosophers of religion can agree on.

[21] Keith Yandell and Harold Netland, *Buddhism, A Christian Exploration and Appraisal* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

the Zen expression "The Dharma comes East" referring to Bodhidarma coming from India to China, bringing Zen with him.) There then follows a sympathetic examination of Buddhist doctrines pertaining to such topics as Truth, Rebirth and Karma, and Enlightenment and Nirvana. Following this appears a sensitive evaluation of similarities and differences between Buddhism and Christianity.

Yet, the book goes beyond comparing/contrasting Buddhism with Christianity. In their Introduction the authors state flat out that, "It is our contention that, whatever other merits Buddhism might have, some of its central beliefs are deeply problematic and should be rejected."[22] The authors challenge the coherence of Buddhist metaphysics, most visibly a critique of the Buddhist belief in "no-self" in favor of the existence of the self (as attested to by Exoteric Christianity). That is not all. The final chapter, "The Dharma or Gospel?" goes further with this declaration:

> Our purpose here is not to argue comprehensively for the truth of Christian claims as opposed to Buddhist perspectives but rather to clarify the differences between the two sets of claims and, at points, to suggest, in a very preliminary manner, why Christian theism is more plausible than Buddhism.[23]

Here the authors are being modest since what follows is a serious discussion that presents a defense against various Buddhist statements of the problem of evil, and against two arguments for God's non-existence by the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna. The authors make a case for the historical reliability of the Gospels while casting great doubt over the historical reliability of the Buddhist sutras and of early Buddhist history. Finally, in the face of the metaphysical problems in the Buddhists' way of dealing with suffering the authors note that the crucifixion and resurrection resolve these same problems, (allegedly) without or with fewer metaphysical problems.[24] [25]

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[22] Yandell and Netland, pp. xiv-xv.

[23] Yandell and Netland, pp. 176-177.

[24] Unfortunately, the authors do not enter much into the metaphysics of incarnation and resurrection or into the moral implications of vicarious atonement.

[25] Another earlier good example of what I am after is William J. Wainwright, *Mysticism, A Study of its Nature, Cognitive Value, and Moral Implications* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

ESOTERISM

Philosophers have done much work on ineffability, strong and weak, in religions. My proposal here is to supplement that discussion. Philosophers have made quite a fuss over the very meaning of "ineffability" and have worried over its very meaningfulness and its political significance. Philosophers have conducted the discussion almost entirely with regard to mystical religious claims. Thus, Wayne Proudfoot strongly centers his discussion of ineffability on ineffability-claims within religious mystical traditions and concludes that the claim is nothing more than a way for those traditions protectively to create and maintain a sense of mystery.[26] And the feminist philosopher, Grace Jantzen objects to ineffability-claims as a disturbing effort to remove mystical experiences from the realm of rational discourse.[27]

The sole link between ineffability and religious mysticism is unfortunate, because ineffability-claims abound in places far removed from mystical religious traditions. Experiences of ineffability occur in the arts. Regarding music, famously, Schopenhauer thought that it opened an experience of the "ding an sich," Kant's "thing in itself" beyond all human categories. In Aldous Huxley's *Point Counterpoint* one character offers Beethoven's trios as a proof of God's existence. The best way to understand this is to say that the trios have the power to invoke a sense of the ineffable. (I must confess that it's Beethoven's quartets that do that for me.) John Dewey said it best:

> If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of painting and music would not exist. There are values and meanings that can be expressed only immediately by visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence.[28]

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[26] Wayne, Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1985).

[27] Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also Pamela Anderson, "Ineffable Knowledge and Gender," in Philip Goodchild, ed. *Rethinking Philosophy of Religion: Approaches from Continental Philosophy*, series edited by John Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), pp. 162-183.

[28] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1934), p. 77.

My proposal for the treatment of ineffability is for philosophers of religion to broaden their vision to encompass the literature of all the major world religions *as well as* all human undertakings where ineffability figures, including the arts and sexuality. In that way, there is a greater chance to get into the guts of the concept and the phenomenon, and to investigate the possible link between ineffability at large and the presence of God in the world.

Scholars of religion have investigated PP, but philosophers of religion have not done so enough in the ways I am about to suggest. Here too, philosophers have made too strong a connection between PP and mystical experience. The argument is out there that: A universal PP can exist only if the same mystical experiences exist across all religions. However, no mystical experiences are the same across religions, Hence there is no perennial philosophy. Thus, Steven Katz concludes, "There is no *philosophia perennis*" mainly because there cannot be, by his lights, uniform mystical experiences across religions.[29] However, even if there are no identical mystical experiences across religions, this is consistent with there being a common epistemological basis for perennial philosophy. This is because on PP the major epistemological support for PP is not in the first place in mystical experience but in an alleged intuition common to all humanity. Perhaps mystical experience can back-up this intuition, but that is not necessary.[30] Philosophers have much work to do on PP.

So here now is a sampling of my suggestions relating to Esoteric religion:

1. To investigate ineffability claims across religions together with such claims made outside of religious contexts.
2. To examine Esoteric contents across religions for their internal consistency, and their religious adequacy.
3. To explore the connections between the Exoteric and the Esoteric in each religion, to determine translational efficacy between the two (where applicable).
4. To search for abuses of the Exoteric/Esoteric division in creating false ranks of religiosity and a power structure; and to recommend,

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[29] Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism," in Steven T. Katz, ed. *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 24.

[30] See Huston Smith, "Is there a Perennial Philosophy?" The *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 55 (1987), 553-66.

if need be, how to make out the division, if at all, to better serve the religious life.

5. To judge the epistemological basis of PP in an alleged universal intuition. What would show that there is such an intuition? How good is the PP explanation for the intuition not being visible more often at the surface? What is the epistemic value of an alleged universal intuition?

6. To weigh the degree of closeness between the Esoteric forms of the world religions. Is the notion of a perennial philosophy warranted? What is at stake in the issue?

7. Is Esoteric religion a good way to reveal religions to be closer to one another than would be thought in Exoteric religions?

THE TRACK RECORD OF PHILOSOPHERS OF RELIGION

Neither analytic philosophers, nor comparative philosophers, nor feminist philosophers of religion, have attended sufficiently to the sorts of topics I am suggesting.

Analytic Philosophers

Analytic philosophers of religion have stuck pretty close to Christianity and at best to the Judaic-Christian tradition. They *have* thought about religious diversity but in a very limited way. They have excelled at categorizing positions, from religious relativism to religious pluralism (hard and soft) on to non-exclusivism and exclusivism (again, hard and soft). Often, analytic philosophers simply suppose or hypothesize epistemic parity between religions without going further.

In any case, the catfight is mostly over whether a follower of a particular religion is epistemically challenged by knowledge of other religions at odds with hers. David Basinger stands out as championing the view that "for her [one faced with religious diversity] to choose then to retain a purely defensive posture – for her to then claim she is under no obligation to consider the matter further – is for her to forfeit her right to claim justifiably that her perspective is superior."[31] And Alvin

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[31] David Basinger, *Religious diversity: A Philosophical Assessment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 13.

Plantinga leads the clowder (look it up) in favor of exclusivism being just fine.[32] Yet, the discussion stays pretty much there. "Other" religions arise only as examples for setting up the dilemma. Actual evaluation of world religions is scarce, and the Exoteric/Esoteric distinction remains quite a secret for much of standard analytic philosophy of religion.

Comparative Philosophy

Long defines "comparative philosophy of religion" as follows: "Comparative philosophers of religion are seeking to develop new conceptions and methods appropriate to analyzing religion in a comparative context" (p. 389). Long describes Ninian Smart as a comparativist who wants philosophy of religion to be neutral, and not to try to examine religious truth (p. 475). William Christian, who Long says is another comparativist, wants only to determine the different ways the doctrines of different religions can clash, while studiously avoiding "taking sides."

Since 1990, the State University of New York Press has been publishing a flagship series, "Toward a Comparative Philosophy of Religions." Here are typical titles:

–*Applying the Canon in Islam: The Authorization and Maintenance of Interpretive Reasoning in Hanafi Scholarship*
–*Seeing through Texts: Doing Theology among the Srivaisnavas of South India*
–*Rediscovering God with Transcendental Argument: A Contemporary Interpretation of Monistic Kashmiri Saiva Philosophy*
–*Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism.*

These are generally concerned to familiarize readers with religions not prevalent in the Western Northern Hemisphere and to analyze differences and similarities between them and, chiefly, Christianity. Keith Ward has encouraged the comparative philosopher of religion not to stop there, but instead to "be prepared to revise beliefs if and when it comes to seem

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[32] Alvin Plantinga, "Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism," in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, K. Meeker and P. Quinn, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 172–192. I have made my own modest contribution to a defense of exclusivism in Jerome Gellman, "In Defense of a Contented Religious Exclusivist," *Religious Studies,* 36 (2000), 401-417.

necessary."[33] This is closer to the spirit of my suggestions rather than solely comparing and contrasting between religions.

Feminist Philosophy

Feminist philosophy of religion and feminist theology have strong overlaps so I treat them here as one. Formerly, feminist philosophy of religion focused greatly on Christianity, and a traditional version thereof. Some feminists, particularly Rachel Adler, Judith Plaskow, and Melissa Raphael did write seriously on Judaism,[34] and still others studied Islam, notably Leila Ahmed.[35] Since Rita Gross, a Buddhist, lamented in the year 2000 the narrow focus on Christianity, work on Eastern religions has been more extensive.[36] And of course, this has pertained only to gender issues, such as an Eastern fondness for Goddesses. Now, if feminist philosophers of religion were to engage in issues other than gender, they would no longer be acting as *feminist* philosophers. Nonetheless, those *persons* who are feminist philosophers could bring along their religious imagination (in a positive sense) and their keen ability to sniff out implicit biases and power abuses to wider evaluations of the world religions. Feminist philosophy of religion stands as a warning to the rest of us against smug, non-self-reflective and narrow assumptions in and about religions.

Feminist philosophers of religion can also contribute much to the study of ineffability and embodiment. One grand illustration of this possibility is the work of Catherine Keller, who combines feminist interests with studies in apophatic mysticism.

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[33] Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 48.

[34] Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism, An Inclusive Theology and Ethics* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1998); Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai, Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Melissa Raphael's work on Judaism includes, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), "Judaism and Gender," in Lindsay Jones, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition (New York: Macmillan, 2005), and "Jewish Feminist Theology," in Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[35] See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[36] Rita M. Gross, "Feminist Theology: Religiously Diverse Neighborhood or Christian Ghetto? (Roundtable: Feminist Theology and Religious Diversity)," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, (2000), p. 77.

Explanations Of The Track Record

How are we to explain the reticence of philosophers of religion to judge religious belief and practices across religions in the ways I propose? I will take a stab at an answer by listing four reasons: political correctness, a rejection of "truth," an endorsement of cultural incommensurability or isolation, and worries about religious discord.

Political Correctness

In Western countries, in the general culture people sometimes consider it bad taste to examine another person's religious beliefs. There is a feeling among some non-religious folk that a religious attachment is both very precious to a devotee as well as rationally indefensible. Since this is so, it would embarrass a person to find her religious beliefs under examination. Many religious folk might be equally reticent to raise the issue with regard to others because they might be unsure how they would defend or even articulate their own beliefs. Therefore, they assume a protective strategy. In any case, in a culture where everyone is supposed to smile at and be nice to everyone else cross-religious evaluation does not get very far.

Philosophers of religion should not be part of this cultural vogue. Philosophy of religion should include the agenda of evaluating the acceptability of claims and practices across world religions, separately, as well as evaluating religious claims against competing ones. If philosophers of religion will not do it, who should?

Rejection Of Truth

Sometimes folks reject truth in the name of "relativism." I have never seen a coherent characterization of relativism, and do not know any proclaimed relativist who behaves as one is supposed to throughout the course of the day. Here is not the place to trot out the arguments.[37] From my point of view relativism is not a good reason to refrain from evaluation of the acceptability of the world religions.

Some feminists have rejected truth in the name of a "no-exclusive-truth-claims" platform, which strikes me not so much as relativism but

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[37] I refer you to Alvin Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), and Alvin Plantinga, "Postmodernism and Pluralism," in Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 422-457.

simply as a refusal to engage in truth-talk about religion. Rita Gross once urged feminist theologians to study religions other than Christianity to break the hold of exclusive religious truth claims:

> One might hope and expect that feminist theology, with its sensitivity to diversity and to the pain of exclusion, would be among the leading movements to condemn exclusive truth claims in religion, and to manifest a different, religiously diverse stance.[38]

Exclusive religious truth claims, so the thinking goes, are a tool to fix boundaries between outsiders and insiders. So, turning to "other" religions in a non-judgmental way serves to collapse the binary categories of "us" and "them."

In general, feminist philosophers are wary of "truth," thinking it a weapon that men have brandished to enforce obedience to patriarchy and to distinguish between those included and those excluded. Hence, I do not expect feminist philosophers of religion to consider evaluating the truth claims of various religions. However, feminist philosophers of religion can evaluate religions along other dimensions. Feminist philosophers judge unacceptable androcentric/patriarchal thinking and practices in various religions. After we make adjustments as to "whose acceptability" and "whose power" is at stake, we should expand judgments beyond the categories of patriarchal/non-patriarchal, as to the acceptability of religious practices and values (both "theirs" and "ours") in terms of morality, spiritual efficacy, and human flourishing.

The enterprise is fraught with danger, especially from a feminist perspective. The major danger is enlisting neighborhood (including androcentric) values without adequately appreciating the perspective of another religion and its culture. Feminist thinkers have emphasized this, especially lamenting the disregard of the perspectives of the marginalized and oppressed. We should take heed of the feminist philosopher of religion, Pamela Anderson when she writes: "To be objective is to be

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[38] Rita M. Gross, „Feminist Theology: Religiously Diverse Neighborhood or Christian Ghetto? (Roundtable: Feminist Theology and Religious Diversity)," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, (2000), p. 77. Gross has written the by-now classic work on Buddhist feminism: Rita M. Gross, *Soaring and Settling: Buddhist Perspectives on Social and Theological Issues* (N.Y.: Continuum Books, 1998).

able to think one's claims from the perspective of another and to reinvent oneself as other."[39]

Religious Insularity

A third reason for avoiding judging the acceptability of religions is that you cannot adequately understand a religion unless you have lived it from the inside. Hence, you should refrain from making solid judgments about a religion if you are an outsider. At the extreme, this view claims incommensurability between one religion and another. (Rudyard Kipling: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.")

Now, obviously, there is some truth to this. I know this from the way in which non-Jews typically will understand the subtleties of my Jewish religion in a way that misses the point because they really cannot get the point from the outside. To the extent that meaning involves a living context, there is no substitute for living the religion itself.

However, we ought not to make too much of this fact. One is not excluded from understanding other religions, since one can come to appreciate elements of religions not one's own by at least approximating an understanding of their beliefs, values, and experiences. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for me to have engaged in Buddhist meditation for many years with knowledge of Buddhist writings in the background and then come to anticipate stuff I discovered only later in my Buddhist reading. It would not have been possible for me to have benefited in contemplative prayer from the anonymous Christian works *The Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Book of Privy Counsel*, that have enhanced my own Jewish prayer. So, while I might not understand it fully, I can understand another religion enough to value at least some of its important content, and understand it enough to be able as well to depreciate other things.

If what I just wrote was too simplistic for you and did not convince you, then I would argue that still we should not excuse philosophers from dealing with religions to which they do not belong. Philosophy should do the best it can, and if need be bracket such endeavors as coming from an etic standpoint.

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[39] Pamela Anderson, *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion: The Rationality and Myths of Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 78.

Religious Peace

The fourth reason for refraining from religious evaluation connects to some of the above, and that is the desire to foster religious peace and avoid religious strife. Religious animosity so fills the world, the objection goes, that our foremost obligation as human beings is to diminish that strife as much as possible. Evaluating another religion and designating elements of it unacceptable will only increase and harden alienation between devotees of different religions, amplifying the confrontational atmosphere so prevalent between world religions. Better to smile to one another and forget the differences.

This sentiment is a good and honorable one. However, philosophy is quite a different matter. And here I answer that to the contrary, evaluating religions with the intellectual calm and emotional reserve of trained academic philosophers should be a paradigm of how people of one religion can relate to other religions with which they disagree. Such activity presents itself as a replacement for shrill polemics that can lead to acrimony, violence, and wars. Demonstrating how to disagree with respect and regard, which is my experience with Christianity, is a socially beneficial activity where philosophers can have influence. Furthermore, philosophers can provide a counter to religious strife when judging the content of "other" religions as acceptable in one way or another.

To address these topics satisfactorily the three strands of philosophy of religion should cooperate. Comparative philosophers of religion possess expertise in knowing in depth the details and nuances of world religions. Analytic philosophers have the skills to take an idea apart and then (try) to put it back together again with sharper corners, and they have the skills to sniff out logical implications. They certainly have skill in arguing. Feminist philosophers of religion bring an ability to uncover biases in what otherwise might strike one as the height of objectivity and fairness. Womanist feminists, largely Afro-American, can offer an additional perspective, other than that of WASP women university professors, which should be joined by perspectives of women and men in various cultures.[40]

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[40] A classic work of womanism is Emilie M. Townes, ed. *Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspectives on Hope, Salvation, and Transformation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997)

In addition, philosophers of religion should investigate a religion in collaboration with informed, articulate members of that religion. Books alone cannot give a full picture of how beliefs and practices actually affect the religious culture. We philosophers should study and take into account how a religion is lived, including gaps between the way a religion looks on paper and the way its most serious devotees interpret it and live it on the ground. Often, devotees will shape a religion into what they think most important, and live it selectively. So when evaluating a specific religion we should be aware of this potential dualism in its workings.

Conclusion: This little boy from Detroit has grown up to be an analytic philosopher of religion (with side trips to Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Jewish thought) and has witnessed the growth of this discipline into a beneficial presence for religious culture in the English-speaking world. In future, philosophy of religion should contribute to civil culture even more. Honestly assessing religious claims will further the cause of truth as well as demonstrate how to address religions other than one's own in a civil manner even when differing over acceptance. By evaluating Esoteric religion, rather than only studying it or subjecting it to a narrow critique, philosophy of religion can contribute to answering the question as to what extent there is overlap among *acceptable* components of Esoteric religions.[41]

KNOWLEDGE AND THE OBJECTION TO RELIGIOUS BELIEF FROM COGNITIVE SCIENCE

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Abstract. A large chorus of voices has grown around the claim that theistic belief is epistemically suspect since, as some cognitive scientists have hypothesized, such beliefs are a byproduct of cognitive mechanisms which evolved for rather different adaptive purposes. This paper begins with an overview of the pertinent cognitive science followed by a short discussion of some relevant epistemic concepts. Working from within a largely Williamsonian framework, we then present two different ways in which this research can be formulated into an argument against theistic belief. We argue that neither version works.[1]

> Belief in gods requires no special parts of the brain. Belief in gods requires no special mystical experiences, though it may be aided by such experiences. Belief in gods requires no coercion or brainwashing or special persuasive techniques. Rather, belief in gods arises because of the natural functioning of completely normal mental tools working in common natural and social contexts.
>
> Barrett (2004: 21)

I.

Theism is no stranger to attack. In its long and checkered history it has faced a barrage of tough assaults on its veracity. Some of these challenges, like the problem of evil, remain unresolved. The scientific revolution marked the beginning of a particularly difficult period for theism, with these difficulties intensified by modern science. Today

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the science vs. theism debate is an industry of its own. In recent years a growing number of atheists have made recourse to some of the findings in contemporary cognitive science to formulate a novel challenge to theistic belief. According to several psychologists, anthropologists, evolutionary theorists, and cognitive scientists, the human mind evolved in such a way that it is naturally drawn towards belief in disembodied, supernatural agents, the God of monotheism being just one such agent. The belief that God exists, according to most defenders of this view, is an accidental byproduct of certain cognitive mechanisms that evolved for rather different adaptive purposes. Richard Dawkins (2006: 200-22) and Daniel Dennett (2006), for example, make use of this research in their case against theism.[2] Whilst neither explicitly claims that in virtue of this research there is something epistemically suspect about the belief that God exists, the innuendo is obvious. Dawkins contends that these findings partly explain why it is that people acquire and maintain the delusion that God exists, whilst for Dennett this research breaks the spell that binds us to religious belief.

Since no formal arguments are presented, it remains unclear how the research in the cognitive science of religion (CSR) can be used to undermine the epistemic status of the belief that God exists (hereafter the CSR objection). Some, e.g., Murray (2009) and Clark and Barrett (2010, forthcoming) have taken up the challenge of proposing different ways in which such arguments could be formulated to the conclusion that religious beliefs are *irrational*. This paper is a continuation of this line of work but differs in two respects. Firstly, we consider how the CSR objection might be understood in terms of Timothy Williamson's knowledge-first framework. Secondly, in light of the significant role that testimony plays in the acquisition and transmission of religious belief, we consider the role the epistemology of testimony could play in the CSR objection. §2 begins with a presentation of the relevant aspects of the CSR research. Thereafter follows a brief explanation of Williamson's claim that safe belief is a necessary condition for knowledge. A treatment of several epistemic terms of art concludes §2. In §3 we present two different ways in which the CSR research can be formulated into an

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[2] See also Atran (2002), Bering (2006, 2011), Bloom (2005), Boyer (2001), and Wilson (2002).

argument to the effect that the belief that God exists is unsafe. We argue that neither version works.

<p style="text-align:center">II.</p>

2.1. The Cognitive Science of Religion

Owing to differences in methodologies and research goals, there is unfortunately no definitive statement of the cognitive and evolutionary psychology of religion. For our purposes it will suffice to draw attention to the work of Justin Barrett (2004, 2009), a dominant figure in the CSR literature. Here is a rough sketch of Barrett's theory.

Human beings are naturally prone to develop a certain class of concepts that Barrett labels "minimally counterintuitive concepts" (MCIs). A MCI is a standard concept that has been augmented in some rather unusual ways such that it becomes attention-grabbing; easy to understand and remember; and has the capacity to feature in the explanation of many events. A "talking shoe" or an "invisible dog" are examples of MCIs. It is not unusual to find disparate groups, despite having no contact with one another, having many MCIs in common. The concept of a "god" is an example of a common MCI, where a "god" is a disembodied, supernatural agent. Eventually the concept "God" developed where that term denotes the God of monotheism.

The mental configuration of human beings also includes an Agency Detecting Device (ADD) that disposes us to detect agency in our environment. Since ADD is sometimes triggered on the slenderest of bases, this so-called hypersensitive agency detection device (HADD) often registers false positives. With respect to evolutionary psychology, possessing such a hypersensitive device has survival advantages since the speedy and non-inferential detection of an agent in the vicinity (a predator, say, or a potential mate) would have led to greater reproductive success. Once the presence of an agent is registered a second mental tool kicks in. This tool, commonly termed "Theory of Mind" (ToM), attributes a mental life to the detected agent, where such attributions typically concern what desires or intentions that agent might have vis-à-vis the subject.

At a point in our history some primitive peoples perceived a state of affairs that resulted in HADD triggering a belief in the presence of an agent. With the aid of ToM, the state of affairs made sense in virtue of an agent acting in such-and-such a way with such-and-such intentions. However, only agents with MCI concepts of god-like agents could explain what they had perceived, as no natural explanation adequately accounted for these circumstances. As a result human beings came to believe that God exists. In some cases the order of explanation is in the reverse—the MCI "God" developed on its own apart from such inexplicable states of affairs. Only much later did certain human beings retroactively understand said states of affairs in terms of God's actions.

2.2. Knowledge as Safe Belief

Knowledge, for Williamson (2000), requires avoidance of error in similar enough cases. The basic idea is that S knows P only if S is safe from error, where being safe means that there must be no risk or danger that S falsely believes in a relevantly similar case. Knowledge, then, requires a margin for error; that is, cases in which S knows P must be buffered by cases of true belief. The relevant modal notions of safety, risk, and danger are cashed out in terms of possible worlds such that a margin for error is created in so far as there is no close world in which S falls into error. Such worlds act as a "buffer zone" from error and thereby prevent the type of epistemic luck that characterizes Gettier cases.[3] Here is one pertinent formulation of the safety condition:

> If in a case α one knows p on a basis B, then in any case close to α in which one believes a proposition $p^\star$ close to p on a basis $[B^\star]$ close to B, then $p^\star$ is true (Williamson 2009: 325).

For example, S does not know that it's noon by looking at a broken clock correctly reading noon since there is a close world in which S believes falsely e.g. a world in which S looks at the broken clock slightly before or after noon or where the broken clock incorrectly reads 12:02.

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[3] See Gettier (1963) and Shope (1983).

Unlike the aforementioned authors, we grapple with the CSR objection in terms of knowledge and not in terms of rationality. There are several reasons for this difference in strategy. Firstly, since those putting forward the CSR objection do not explicitly state that religious beliefs are irrational in virtue of findings in cognitive science and evolutionary psychology, prima facie there is no reason to interpret their challenge in terms of rationality instead of knowledge, especially if knowledge is the more primitive concept of the two.[4] Given the current popularity of explications of knowledge in terms of safe belief, Williamson's safety condition is a natural choice seeing that he is one of the more influential safety theorists.[5]

Secondly, most agree that knowledge is non-accidentally true belief. However, there is no such consensus to be found amongst those working on rationality. Whilst some consider rationality to be the degree to which evidence increases the probability of a belief's being true, others see it as a property that supervenes on the reliability of cognitive mechanisms. And yet others deem it to be a kind of self-reflective state. As such some see rationality as being determined from an external point of view whilst others from an internal point of view. And the concepts of rationality that result from such divergent approaches can be radically different. By concentrating on knowledge as opposed to rationality we avoid this murky and contested territory.

Thirdly, given that the CSR research concerns the accidental nature by which theistic belief arose, one natural concern would be that theistic belief is accidentally true or unsafe. It would not make sense, then, to formulate arguments against theistic belief on the basis of the CSR research in terms of rationality for on most accounts of rationality an agent S may be rational in believing p despite S's being lucky that p is true.

Finally, there is good reason to think that the appropriate norm for assertion and practical reasoning is knowledge and not justified or rational belief (Williamson 2000: 238ff; Hawthorne and Stanley 2008). Since theistic belief is often the subject of assertion and, more importantly, influences the way theists go about living their lives, it makes sense to worry about whether theists can know that God exists in light of the

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[4] For arguments to the effect that knowledge is a primitive concept, see Williamson (2000: 2-5).

[5] Sosa (1999) and Pritchard (2005, 2009) are the other two influential safety theorists.

CSR research more than whether theists can rationally believe that God exists.

Before commencing our treatment of the CSR objection, two epistemic terms of art need to be addressed. Firstly, there is a distinction between individual epistemology and social epistemology. The first makes normative assessments of a specific agent's beliefs, e.g., that an agent S's belief that p is warranted or rational or justified or known if and only if conditions $C_1, \ldots, C_n$ are satisfied. The second differs in that normative assessments are made about an entire community's belief(s). We understand the methodology of social epistemology to begin with an assessment of which method or cognitive process a group uses to produce a certain belief and then to judge the epistemic status of that belief, the judgment naturally applying to all agents in that community. An adequate treatment of the CSR objection must take into account this distinction for it is unclear whether CSR objectors have specific theists in mind or intend their remarks to apply to all theists.

Secondly, knowledge is factive—only true propositions can be known. Without thereby begging the question, it makes little sense for the CSR objection to be framed on the assumption that theism is false for then it would be trivially true that theistic belief is unsafe. The CSR literature would then be irrelevant to the claim that theistic belief is unsafe. We therefore interpret the CSR objector as making the very interesting claim that despite it being true that God exists, God cannot be known to exist.[6] Given the conceptual dependence of assertion, practical reasoning, and evidence on knowledge in Williamson's framework (ibid.: 184ff), such a challenge is a serious one indeed.

III.

As adverted to earlier, we think that the CSR objection can be formulated into two different arguments to the conclusion that the belief that God exists is unsafe. An independent discussion of each objection follows.

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[6] The same point can be made with respect to interpreting the CSR objector as claiming that theistic belief is unjustified, where justification is understood as a property supervening on the reliability of a cognitive process.

3.1. The Counterfactual Argument

Recall that one does not know it is noon by looking at a broken clock that fortuitously just so happens to correctly read noon. That the agent would have falsely believed it noon even if it were not noon is one way of explaining why agents who look at broken clocks fortuitously reading the correct time are denied knowledge. On similar grounds, the CSR objector might have the following argument in mind:

(1) If God did not exist human beings would still believe that God exists (given that humans are primed to believe in supernatural agents independent of whether or not such agents exist).
(2) Therefore the belief that God exists is unsafe.

The cogency of this argument turns on the first premise, which is expressed in the form of a counterfactual. There are three reasons why this argument fails. Firstly, those familiar with the history of knowledge accounts in the post-Gettier period will recognize that the type of counterfactual expressed by (1) corresponds to Robert Nozick's sensitivity condition for knowledge. According to Nozick (1981: 171), an agent S does not know p if it is the case that were p false S would still believe p. It is now widely recognized that the sensitivity condition for knowledge is inadequate in several respects.[7] That theistic belief fails to satisfy the sensitivity condition for knowledge in light of evolutionary cognitive science is therefore irrelevant.

Secondly, the Counterfactual Argument is invalid as it is not the case that if a belief fails the sensitivity condition it is therefore unsafe; that is to say, a failure of sensitivity does not entail a lack of safety. For example, in some cases sensitivity is the more stringent condition, whilst in others safety is. The following two points of logic elicit the difference between the safety and sensitivity conditions. When it comes to cases concerning knowledge of the denial of skeptical hypotheses the safety principle is less demanding than the sensitivity principle. The sensitivity principle requires that the agent not believe p in the nearest possible world in which

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[7] For some reasons counting against the sensitivity condition, see Goldman (1986: 45-6).

p is false. As such no agent can know the denial of skeptical hypotheses, e.g., "I am not a brain in the vat," by the simple sensitivity test because in the nearest possible world in which the agent *is* a brain in the vat the agent continues to believe that he is not a brain in the vat.

The safety principle, however, permits knowing the denial of skeptical hypotheses. By the safety principle I count as knowing the everyday proposition *p* "that I have hands" only if I safely believe *p*. It follows, then, that if I safely believe *p* then there is no close world in which I am a brain in the vat and am led to falsely believe that I have hands. Consequently, if I know that I have hands and I know that that entails that I am not a brain in the vat, then I know that I am not a brain in the vat.

On the other hand, cases can be constructed in which safety is more demanding than sensitivity. Suppose *S* truly believes *p* in the actual world but (i) in the *closest* world in which *p* is false *S* does *not* believe *p,* and (ii) there is a *close* world in which *S* falsely believes *p*. In this case *S* satisfies the sensitivity condition but fails to satisfy the safety condition. The following case illustrates this point. Unbeknownst to Mary the thermometer she has just purchased is defective and will always yield a reading of 39°C regardless of her temperature. Mary, who is running a fever of 39°C, then uses the thermometer to measure her temperature and it just so happens to correctly read her temperature of 39°C. However, in the nearest world in which her temperature is not 39°C and she uses this thermometer to take her temperature, she is distracted by her son and she doesn't form any belief about her temperature. She accordingly satisfies the sensitivity condition for knowledge. However, there happens to be a non-closest close world in which Mary, who is running a fever of 38.5°C, uses this thermometer to take her temperature and consequently forms the false belief that her temperature is 39°C. Mary thus fails to satisfy the safety condition.

In light of the complicated relationship between the sensitivity and safety conditions for knowledge, with respect to any belief *p* it is not the case that failure of the sensitivity condition entails failure of the safety condition. The counterfactual argument is therefore invalid.

A third reason to discount the Counterfactual Argument is a semantic one. According to the standard Lewisian semantics for counterfactuals, a counterfactual with an impossible antecedent is vacuously true (Lewis 1973: 24). For example, the counterfactual (3) "If frogs were numbers,

pigs would fly" is true but vacuously so. As discussed earlier, we have interpreted the CSR objector as putting forward her objection on the assumption that God exists. On standard conceptions of God's existence, if God exists he exists necessarily. That is to say, he exists in every possible world. Therefore by the CSR objector's own lights the antecedent of (1) is impossible. Asserting (1), therefore, amounts to no more than asserting (3). There is thus ample reason to discredit the Counterfactual Argument.

3.2. The Argument from Testimony Chains

Reliability, as a property of a belief-forming method, comes in different kinds, two of which are important for the purpose at hand—local and global. The latter refers to a method M's reliability in producing a range of token output beliefs in different propositions $P, Q, R, \ldots$, etc. A method M is globally reliable if and only if it produces sufficiently more true beliefs than false beliefs in a range of different propositions. For example, M could be the visual process and P the proposition that there is a pencil on the desk, Q the proposition that there are clouds in the sky, and R the proposition that the bin is full. If a sufficiently high number of P, $Q, R, \ldots$ are true, then method M is globally reliable. A method M is locally reliable with respect to an individual target belief P if and only if M produces a sufficient ratio of more true beliefs than false beliefs in that very proposition P. Method M, e.g. the visual method, is locally reliable with respect to the belief P if and only it produces a sufficiently high ratio of true beliefs about the presence of the pencil on the desk.[8]

According to Williamson, for a belief to count as safe it must, amongst other things, be the product of a globally reliable method or basis: "If in a case α one knows P on a basis B, then in any case close to α in which one believes a proposition P^* close to P on a basis close to B, P^* is true" (Williamson 2009: 325). In light of these considerations, the CSR objector might have the following argument in mind:

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[8] At this point we remain neutral on whether reliability should be understood as actual reliability *à la* McGinn (1999) or as counterfactual reliability *à la* Goldman (2000).

(3)   The basis on which the theist believes that God exists is globally unreliable.

(4)   Therefore, the belief that God exists is unsafe.

According to Barrett, the basis on which theistic belief arose involves the interaction of HADD, MCI's, and other mental tools, ToM in particular. For the sake of ease, let us call this set of mental tools HADD+. On the simplifying assumption that these constitute a singular basis of belief, HADD+, so the CSR objection argues, is globally unreliable as HADD+ generates many false positives. Hence, the doxastic products of HADD+ are unsafe. The above argument is therefore valid and theistic belief unsafe.

As discussed earlier, the distinction between individual and social epistemology must be kept in mind when assessing the CSR objection. It is unclear *which* theist is the target of this argument. With respect to the contemporary theist, it is controversial whether (i) said theists come to believe that God exists on the basis of HADD+, and (ii) whether HADD+ is globally unreliable. Concerning (i), some contemporary theists believe that God exists either via testimony or as the result of an argument, neither of which involves HADD+. With respect to (ii), even were the contemporary theist to believe that God exists on the basis of HADD+, today we use HADD+ in a fashion that is globally reliable; that is, we form more true than false beliefs about agents in our environments. So the above argument is irrelevant to most contemporary theists.

Suppose, however, we concede the truth of (3) for the very earliest theists because they were using HADD+ in ways that generated many false positives; that is to say, for these very early theists their HADD+ may have been globally unreliable. Therefore, with respect to these very early theists the belief that God exists was unsafe. Given this supposition, the CSR objector might have the following argument in mind:

(5)   On the basis of HADD+ some primordial human beings came to believe that God exists.

(6)   In these primordial human beings HADD+ was a globally unreliable basis for belief.

(7) Beliefs produced by globally unreliable methods do not constitute knowledge.

(8) Therefore, these primordial human beings did not know that God exists.

(9) Contemporary theists believe that God exists via testimony chains originating with these primordial human beings.

(10) A testimony chain that does not begin with knowledge cannot yield knowledge to the recipient at the termination of that testimony chain.

(11) Therefore, contemporary theists don't know that God exists via such testimony chains.

The Argument from Testimony Chains seeks to undermine the epistemic status of theistic belief by identifying its epistemically suspect causal origins. It goes without saying that the causal origin of a belief p can be important to the epistemic status of p. For instance, I cannot know q if I believe q on the basis of an inference from p, and where I do not know p.[9]

As has been conceded, (5)—(8) may indeed be true. And given that many contemporary theists believe that God exists via testimony, (9) may be true as well. (10), however, is false. An agent S_2 can safely believe a true proposition p via testimony from an agent S_1 even if S_1 does *not* safely believe p. Consider the following case from Lackey (2008: 48). It is plausible that a child knows that modern-day *homo sapiens* evolved from *homo erectus* when taught so by her teacher, even though her teacher is a religious fundamentalist who does not believe that evolution is true. In this case the child's belief is safe despite the teacher not believing that modern-day *homo sapiens* evolved from *homo erectus* and therefore not knowing as much (on the assumption that knowledge entails belief). Testimony can thus be an epistemically generative process—it may permit the hearer to gain something the speaker lacks.

So much for testimony from one person to another. But what about testimony chains? Might a testimony chain that originates with a person who does not safely believe p prevent the person at the termination of the chain from knowing p? An extrapolation of the foregoing case proves

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[9] See Goldman (1986: 52) for a further case demonstrating the importance of a diachronic approach to epistemic status.

that safe belief is possible for an agent at the termination of such a chain. Suppose Billy, one of the children in the biology class, tells his best friend Jack that modern-day *homo sapiens* evolved from *homo erectus* (and would not have easily deceived Jack in this case). We take it that Jack also counts as safely believing that modern-day *homo sapiens* evolved from *homo erectus*. And so on. And surely the contemporary theist, relying on the testimony of her parents or community, counts as knowing that God exists even if that testimony chain originated in a primordial ancestor who did not know that God exists. With respect to the contemporary theist, at least, the Argument from Testimony Chains is unsound.[10]

In light of these considerations, the CSR objector may concede that whilst (10) is not a universally true principle, there are cases in which it does hold and that the genesis of theistic belief according to CSR is just such a case. For example, if I truly believe that the train is about to depart on the basis of testimony from someone who read a departure schedule riddled with mistakes, it seems that my belief does not count as safe. The contemporary theist is in a similar position, so the CSR objector might argue, if she believes that God exists based on a testimony chain originating in an ancestor who came to believe that God exists on the basis of a globally unreliable method.

There is room to argue, however, that *exceptionally long* testimony chains with unsafe origins exhibit some unique epistemic features. We argue that a case can be made for there being a sense in which the primordial human (*S1*) *is* a reliable testifier and as such the contemporary theist (*SN*) can safely believe that God exists from a testimony chain originating with *S1* even if S1 used the globally unreliable HADD+ to arrive at theistic belief. For the sake of argument consider a case in which *S1* holds a set of beliefs {*P, Q, R, …*} and that many of these beliefs are generated by HADD+. *S1* testifies to others a great many of the beliefs she holds overall. Let us stipulate further that *P* is the belief that God exists and is one of the few true beliefs in the set {*P, Q, R, …*}. *S1* is thus an unreliable testifier (as the CSR objector contends). Assume further, and

not unreasonably, that as time passes humans develop mentally. As they do, the testimony chains passing along beliefs *Q, R,* and the other false beliefs in the set "die out" or "dry up" because people come to realize that *Q, R,* etc. are false. We call this feature of long testimony chains *epistemic winnowing*; individuals and communities do not generally pass along information they deem false. And epistemic winnowing is something we expect others in our community to be committed to.[11] By the time *SN* receives the testimony that *P* from a testimony chain originating with *S1,* there are no false beliefs from *S1*'s mouth that are passed along anymore; if so, from *SN*'s perspective, at least, *S1* is a reliable testifier.

One can explain this conclusion in terms of safety: there is no close world in which *SN* falsely believes *P* or any other relevantly similar belief by way of a testimony chain originating with *S1*. It seems reasonable to us that the contemporary theist who believes by way of such a long testimony chain is the beneficiary of epistemic winnowing. Therefore, even if the testimony chain by which a contemporary theist believes that God exists has an unsafe genesis, the belief held thereby is safe. The Argument from Testimony Chains is thus unsuccessful.

Additionally, it is doubtful that many contemporary theists believe that God exists on the basis of an extremely long testimony chain that originates in an unreliable theistic ancestor. It is more likely that a considerable number of contemporary theists believe on the basis of a religious experience. Given that for most of us HADD+ is globally reliable, it stands to reason that were HADD+ the basis on which theistic belief is formed as a result of these religious experiences, such theistic belief would be safe.

IV.

We have presented two different ways in which the cognitive science of religion might be used to generate an argument towards the conclusion that the belief that God exists is unsafe. For a number of diverse reasons each argument fails. This failure does not entail that belief in God is safe, however. That would require a separate consideration of its own.

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[11] For the role of one's community in the epistemology of testimony, see Goldberg (2010).

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MATERIALISM AND THE RESURRECTION:
ARE THE PROSPECTS IMPROVING?

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Abstract. In 1999 Dean Zimmerman proposed a "falling elevator model" for a bodily resurrection consistent with materialism. Recently he has defended the model against objections, and a slightly different version has been defended by Timothy O'Connor and Jonathan Jacobs. This article considers both sets of responses, and finds them at best partially successful; a new objection, not previously discussed, is also introduced. It is concluded that the prospects for the falling-elevator model, in either version, are not bright.

If humans are purely material beings, an afterlife has to take the form of bodily resurrection. But there are notorious difficulties for materialistic doctrines of resurrection, mainly over the question of personal identity. Most such doctrines fail to allay the suspicion that the "resurrected" person may be a mere replica, rather than the identical individual who formerly lived and died. There are various ways of elucidating this suspicion, but the core question concerns the lack of a certain sort of causal connection between the resurrected individual and the person who perished. It is widely accepted that for a particular material object to exist over a period of time each of its stages must be directly causally responsible (no doubt along with other conditions) for the successor stages. As my car sits in the garage, the positions and activities (if any) of its various parts, from engine and exhaust-pipe down to atoms and molecules, are the direct result of the positions and activities of its parts in the immediate past. But this kind of connection seems to be lacking in materialist accounts of the resurrection. The most common accounts have it that God miraculously reassembles elementary particles (either the original particles or some others) in a configuration that exactly matches the configuration of a person's body prior to her death. There is here a certain sort of causal

connection, to be sure, but it is not direct: instead, the previously living body furnishes a sort of blue-print in God's mind, according to which the replacement body is constructed. The situation is similar to that of the transporter device featured in the *Star Trek* series: in that case, the bodily structure is "read off" by the sending mechanism, the information is transmitted to the new location, and a body is produced following the instructions (except in rare cases of malfunction, which may prove life-threatening to the person thus "transmitted"). But this sort of indirect connection, it seems, is not sufficient to preserve personal identity: in the *Star Trek* series we actually have a series of different, comparatively sort-lived, individuals playing each of the roles of Kirk, Spock, and the rest – though mercifully, both the individuals in the story and the average viewer remain blissfully unaware of this fact!

Interestingly, a philosopher who has produced one of the most trenchant critiques of "reassembly" theories of resurrection, has also devised the one version of a materialist resurrection that is generally acknowledged to be conceptually coherent. The philosopher in question is, of course, Peter van Inwagen. Here is his proposal in his own words:

> It is part of the Christian faith that all men who share in the sin of Adam must die. What does it mean to say that I must die? Just this: that one day I shall be composed entirely of non-living matter; that is, I shall be a corpse. It is not part of the Christian faith that I must at any time be totally annihilated or disintegrate. . . . It is of course true that men apparently cease to exist, those who are cremated, for example. But it contradicts nothing in the creeds to suppose that this is not what really happens, and that God preserves our corpses contrary to all appearance. . . . Perhaps at the moment of each man's death, God removes his corpse and replaces it with a simulacrum which is what is burned or rots. Or perhaps God is not quite so wholesale as this: perhaps He removes for "safekeeping" only the "core person"--the brain and central nervous system--or even some special part of it. These are details.[1]

This, then guarantees the individual's continued existence (albeit as a corpse); at the resurrection, God re-animates the corpse, heals its

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[1] Peter van Inwagen, "The Possibility of Resurrection," *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* Vol. 9 (1978), pp. 114-21; reprinted, with an Author's Note added in 1990, in Paul Edwards (ed.), *Immortality* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 242-46; pp. 245-46.

fatal injury or illness, and puts the revitalized person on the road to a fuller life.

It seems quite plausible that van Inwagen has presented a scenario that is logically coherent. And upon reflection, it is not surprising that he has succeeded where others have failed. The core difficulty for belief in the resurrection lies precisely in the fact that bodies disintegrate after death, often with their constituent matter widely scattered and even taken up into the bodies of other persons. But on van Inwagen's scenario, this is precisely what does *not* happen – though admittedly, it may seem to our naive and uninstructed observation that it does occur.

This scenario however, suffers from an important weakness of its own: it seems that no one believes that this is what actually happens; perhaps not even van Inwagen himself. The central point is made nicely by Dean Zimmerman, who tells us that he once assisted a friend who was an anatomy student in dissecting a corpse. He observes that

> Opening a human skull and finding a dead brain is sort of like opening the ground and finding a dinosaur skeleton. Of course it is in some sense possible that God takes our brains when we die and replaces them with stuff that looks for all the world like dead brains, just as it is possible that God created the world 6000 years ago and put dinosaur bones in the ground to test our faith in a slavishly literal reading of Genesis. But neither is particularly satisfying as a picture of how God actually does business.[2]

The massive deception on God's part entailed by this scenario is already, one would think, a sufficient reason to reject it. (One may also wonder how our attitude to the "remains" of the deceased would be altered, if we actually took this story to be the true one.) In a later re-publication of his article, van Inwagen appended an "author's note" in which he states, "If I were writing a paper on this topic today, I should not make the definite statement 'I think this is the *only* way such a being could accomplish it [viz., resurrection].' I am now inclined to think that there may well be other ways, ways that I am unable even to form an idea of because I lack the conceptual resources to do so."[3]

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[2] Dean A. Zimmerman, "The Compatibility of Materialism and Survival: The 'Falling Elevator' Model," *Faith and Philosophy* 16:2 (April 1999), pp.194-212; p. 196.

[3] P. Edwards (ed.), *Immortality*, p. 246.

Dean Zimmerman has come to van Inwagen's assistance by providing a model for resurrection that (he claims) exhibits the virtues of van Inwagen's account without portraying God as, in effect, a body-snatcher. Subsequently at least two philosophers (Kevin Corcoran and Hud Hudson[4]) have embraced the proposal, while others (including David Hershenov, Eric Olson, and me[5]) have criticized it. Zimmerman has recently published an article in which he defends his proposal against objections,[6] and Timothy O'Connor and Jonathan Jacobs have advocated a slightly altered version as a complement for their own materialist metaphysic of human persons.[7] It is these developments that form the subject-matter of the present paper. We shall sketch the main outlines of Zimmerman's proposal, and state and assess some of the main objections to it. Then we will consider the variant of the proposal by O'Connor and Jacobs. The question to be answered is: Does the Zimmerman proposal, in either of its variants, offer an improved possibility for a materialist resurrection, over those presented earlier?

The question of Zimmerman's own relationship to his proposed scenario is a bit perplexing. To begin with, Zimmerman himself is not a materialist, but rather a dualist – indeed, an emergent dualist.[8] His

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[4] Kevin Corcoran, "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps," in Kevin Corcoran (ed.), *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 201–17; and Hud Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), Ch. 7. (Hudson combines the model with a "temporal parts" view concerning the persistence of objects over time, a view that Zimmerman rejects.)

[5] David Hershenov, "Van Inwagen, Zimmerman, and the Materialist Conception of Resurrection," *Religious Studies* 38 (2002), pp. 451–69; Eric Olson, "Immanent Causation and Life after Death," in George Gasser, ed., *Personal Identity and Resurrection: How Do We Survive Our Death?* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), pp. 51-66; and William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 225-31.

[6] Dean Zimmerman, "Bodily Resurrection: The Falling Elevator Model Revisited," in George Gasser (ed.), *Personal Identity and Resurrection*, pp. 33-50.

[7] Timothy O'Connor and Jonathan D. Jacobs, "Emergent Individuals and the Resurrection," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 2:2 (Autumn 2010), pp. 69-88.

[8] "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," p. 37. Zimmerman cites Hasker, *The Emergent Self*; he also refers the reader to articles of his own, including "Material People," in M. Loux and Dean Zimmerman (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 491–526; "From Property Dualism to Substance Dualism," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume 85 (2010); and "Should a Christian Be a Mind–Body Dualist?" in M. Peterson and R. Van Arragon (eds),

primary aim, therefore, was to provide van Inwagen and other materialists with a materialist model for the resurrection that is superior to those previously on offer. However, Zimmerman does have a use of his own for the model, not indeed to preserve personal identity in the resurrection (continuity of soul suffices to accomplish that), but rather to permit him to assert, as many orthodox believers have wished to assert, that the body which is resurrected is identical with the body that previously lived and died. He states, however, "I have no confidence whatsoever that the way I suggest is anything close to what actually happens"[9]; what he is offering is a "just so story" about the resurrection. And yet, as we shall see, there are features of his account which seem to suggest that it should not, for him, be usable even for the more modest purpose of securing identity between the resurrection body and the body that died. Readers must make what they can of these perplexities, unless and until Zimmerman himself chooses to further enlighten us. In this paper, Zimmerman's scenario will be investigated as a serious metaphysical proposal.

The difference between Zimmerman's and van Inwagen's views can be briefly summarized: for van Inwagen, God plays the role of a body-snatcher, whereas for Zimmerman, instead of body-snatching, we have body-splitting. The body fissions in a certain way, with one of the fission products going to the grave and the other appearing in the resurrection world. Zimmerman's name for his approach is the Falling Elevator Model, drawing on the idea that "according to the 'physics' of cartoons, it is possible to avoid death in a plummeting elevator simply by jumping out the split second before the elevator hits the basement floor."[10] Similarly, the body of a dying person escapes dissolution by "jumping" from the deathbed scene directly into the resurrection world. More details are needed here, of course. But before going into those details, we should point out one formidable difficulty that Zimmerman acknowledges in his scenario: it requires us to accept a "closest continuer" account of personal identity. He argues, however, that a materialism such as van Inwagen's is bound to affirm a closest continuer view in any case, so this does not amount to an *additional* cost of the Falling Elevator Model.

Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion (Malden, MA: Basil Blackwell, 2004), pp. 315–27.

[9] "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," p. 35.

[10] "Falling Elevator Model," p. 196.

Zimmerman begins by agreeing with van Inwagen that "Whenever some matter constitutes an organism, there is a special kind of event, a Life, that occurs to the matter and that continues for as long as that organism exists."[11] In this Life-event, the "organism displays a distinctive sort of 'immanent causation', its later stages causally dependent upon earlier stages."[12] This dependence, furthermore, must be *direct,* not mediated through either a teleportation device or a blueprint in God's mind. Given this,

> The Falling Elevator Model is a way to allow the Life of a dying organism to go one way, while the dead matter goes another way. The trick is to posit immanent-causal connections that "jump" from the matter as it is dying, connecting the Life to some other location where the crucial organic structure of the organism is preserved. . . . So every portion of the matter in my body undergoes something like fission at the time of my death. Consider just the atoms in my body; and pretend that my body consists entirely of atoms (and the parts of atoms). The Falling Elevator Model affirms that, at the moment of my death,[13] God allows each atom to continue to immanently-cause later stages in the "life" or history of an atom, right where it is then located, as it normally would do; but that God *also* gives each atom the miraculous power to produce an exact duplicate at a certain distance in space or time (or both), at an unspecified location I shall call "the next world." The local, normal, immanent-causal process linking each atom to an atom within the corpse is sufficient to secure their identities; no atom ceases to exist merely because it exercised this miraculous "budding" power to produce new matter in a distant location. Still, the arrangement of atoms that appears at a distance is directly immanent-causally connected to my body at the time of my death; and there are no other arrangements of living matter produced by my dying body that are candidates for continuing my Life. The atoms do something that resembles fissioning – though what they really do is more like "budding," producing exactly similar offspring in the next world – while the organism does *not* fission. My body's Life does not divide, but goes in one direction only, carrying my body with it to a new location.[14]

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[11] "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," p. 35.

[12] Ibid., p. 35f.

[13] There is some ambiguity in various statements concerning the timing of the "fission" event. I will assume that it occurs at the moment dividing life from death, the moment such that at any earlier time the individual is alive, and at any later time life has ceased.

[14] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

This, then, gives us the "bare bones" of the Falling Elevator Model; some further details will emerge as we consider various objections.

Here is one question that might occur to us: granted that immanent-causal causation is one constraint on the persistence of organisms, and that the Falling Elevator Model satisfies that constraint, may there not be additional constraints that the model fails to satisfy? David Hershenov has answered this question in the affirmative: the additional constraint he specifies is that, when new matter is added to an existing organism, "There is an overlap of the new and the old, and this enables the new particles to be assimilated into the individual's body."[15] This, however, is not possible with Zimmerman's model: on that model, there is no assimilation of new particles to earlier ones, and thus "the resurrected body is a duplicate, constituted by brand new matter that never had a chance to become part of my body."[16] Zimmerman's response to this challenge is both interesting and complex. He writes,

> I might be able to accept an assimilation principle that merely rules out the possibility of an organism's losing all of its proper parts at the same time.. Suppose that, as a matter of necessity, whenever a living thing dies there are some proper parts that also cease to exist (for example, cells or organs that perish along with the organism). I am not at all sure whether this is true. But if it were, then, so long as the resurrection jump works for the organism as a whole, it ought to succeed in bringing these proper parts into the next world as well. And therefore, whenever a living thing survives death by means of the falling elevator method, some proper parts of it will also survive.[17]

These remarks seem to imply that it would be an advantage for Zimmerman's model if, when a living thing dies, its organs cease to exist. But this does not seem to be the case: if the organs cease to exist, then from that time on there simply *are no such organs,* either in our present

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[15] "Van Inwagen, Zimmerman, and the Materialist Conception of Resurrection," p. 462. See Hershenov's article for an extensive discussion of the role the assimilation requirement plays in our ordinary thoughts about the continuous existence of organic bodies. He also argues (less successfully, I think) *against* the requirement of immanent causation.

[16] "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," p. 44.

[17] Ibid., pp. 44-45, emphasis added.

world or in the resurrection world. The important question, however, is whether, at the point of fission, the body "takes with it" its major organs (at least) into the new world; while leaving behind the matter of which those organs were previously composed. Upon reflection, this seems to be what we should expect, given the other assumptions of the model. It would be strange indeed to say that *the same body* has been transferred to the resurrection world, only with a brand-new heart, brain, liver. lungs, and all the rest! The strangeness of this is brought out by the following bit of dialogue:

> "That's a fine new axe you have there!"
> "Oh, no – it's the same old axe I've been using for many years. But it just came back from the repair shop, where they fitted it with a new handle and a new axehead."

If body parts are not transferred along with the body, then the Falling Elevator Model cannot accept even the very modest assimilation principle stated above.

This move by Zimmerman serves to call attention to a feature of his model that might otherwise have escaped our notice. Recall his objection to the idea that, on van Inwagen's approach, "God takes our brains when we die and replaces them with stuff that looks for all the world like dead brains." It now turns out that on Zimmerman's own model (interpreted as above) God does very much the same thing! On that model, the mass of stuff Zimmerman and his friend removed from the skull of the cadaver *was not a human brain;* it had never been part of a human body, had never been enclosed in a human skull or subserved human thought and emotion. The real brain, skull, heart, liver, and so on now exist *only* in the resurrection world. It is true enough that what is left behind "looks for all the world like dead brains," but that is not by any means what it actually is. To be sure, God's mode of operation is slightly different in the two cases. On Zimmerman's model God doesn't "snatch" the body; instead, he endows it with the miraculous power to transport itself to the resurrection world. And he doesn't himself craft the "brain surrogate" that is left behind; rather, he creates a situation in which the real brain does that itself, by leaving behind its elementary particles, etc., in the right relative positions as it departs for a better place. Nevertheless,

the similarities are striking. If the deceptiveness of the whole process is a reason to reject van Inwagen's scenario, is Zimmerman's really all that much better off?

But we need to return to Zimmerman's defense of his view. What is needed, he tells us, is a more precise formulation of the assimilation principle. After one less-than-successful effort, he proposes

(AP2) If x persists through some finite period leading up to, but not including, t, then if x exists at t, every set S into which x is decomposable without remainder at t has members with parts that were parts of x before t.[18]

This principle, Zimmerman thinks, is what Hershenov needs, and if it is true then the body in the resurrection world, on the Falling Elevator Model, cannot be identical with the body that previously existed in our world. For the body in the resurrection world is presumably decomposable into a set of elementary particles, and we have been told that none of those particles existed here in our everyday world. But, Zimmerman claims, (AP2) is not obviously true. In quantum mechanics, individual particles (for instance, those in one's body) are not "trackable" over time. He asks:

Why do nature's laws fail to distinguish between circumstance A, in which *this* proton shows up *there* and *that* proton shows up *here*, and circumstance B, in which *that* proton shows up *there* and *this* proton shows up *here*? Some say: the best explanation is that the imagined difference between A and B does not exist – these are not two distinct states of the system. If the two protons really persisted over time, A and B *would* be distinct states; and so the protons do not really persist.[19]

If this is so, then (AP2), which apparently does require the persistence of particles, is false, and the Falling Elevator Model has nothing to fear. Zimmerman acknowledges that there are alternative explanations that do allow particles to persist. He asks, however, "why gamble on an assimilation principle that requires the falsehood of an attractive explanation of this

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[18] Ibid., p. 46.
[19] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

strange feature of quantum statistics?"[20] Due metaphysical caution, then, should lead us to withhold assent from such a principle as (AP2).

The maneuver is ingenious, but I do not believe it succeeds. So far as I know, neither Zimmerman nor anyone else has claimed that quantum mechanics has refuted the relativistic equivalence of mass and energy, enshrined in the famous equation $e = mc^2$. I suggest, then, that instead of particles as the fundamental "parts" of matter we think instead of *parcels of mass-energy.* Such "parcels" have the advantage over particles that they can undergo more changes of state while retaining their identity. (Compare: ice cubes vs. H_2O.) Parcels of mass-energy can exist in the form of discrete particles, but they can transform into different kinds of particles (as happens in high-energy physics experiments), or into radiant energy (as in the thermonuclear reactions in our sun), or combine with other such parcels, and so on. The flexibility built into the notion of parcels of mass-energy means that (AP2) can very well be true, even in the face of the failure of individual particles to persist, *provided that* the "parts" mentioned in the principle are understood as parcels of mass-energy. To make this absolutely clear, we may restate the principle as follows:

(AP2') If *x* persists through some finite period leading up to, but not including, *t*, then if *x* exists at *t*, every set *S* into which *x* is decomposable without remainder at *t* has members with parts – viz., parcels of mass-energy – that were parts of *x* before *t*.

(AP2'), I claim, formulates our belief that assimilation is required in a way that is not undermined by the quantum phenomena adduced by Zimmerman. And it does rule out the Falling Elevator Model; on that model, all of the mass-energy of the original body remains behind in our everyday world.

The other main objection to be considered here is one put forward by me concerning the Falling Elevator Model's endorsement of a closest continuer theory of personal identity.[21] What is problematic about the

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[20] Ibid., p. 47.

[21] The objection presented by Eric Olson will not be considered here. The objection is extremely interesting, but the argument becomes quite complicated and I am inclined to think the result must be inconclusive. For discussion, see Zimmerman's "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," pp. 48-50.

theory is its violation of what has come to be called the "only x and y principle" (OXY), stated roughly by Zimmerman as "the thesis that facts outside the spatiotemporal path swept out by an object could not have made any difference to the question of whether a single object swept along that path."[22]

It is clear that the model does require a closest continuer theory which violates (OXY). Consider a situation in which, as a person approaches death, the body's particles undergo "budding," as the model prescribes, and as a result a body comes to exist in the future, resurrection world. Now, if the body in our world were to survive, *that* body would continue to be the body of that person, and in fact to *be* the person,[23] since it would be the "closest continuer" of that person's life. If on the other hand that body does not survive (as the model prescribes), the closest continuer is the body in the resurrection world.

Now, Zimmerman recognizes that the endorsement of a closest continuer view might strike us as a disadvantage of his model.[24] He argues, as has been noted, that any materialist view of human beings can be forced to adopt a closest continuer theory, so this does not constitute an additional cost for the Falling Elevator Model over and above what a materialist is already committed to. I claimed, on the contrary, that a materialist need not, and should not, embrace a closest continuer theory. Here in brief is the case for Zimmerman's claim: consider an organism that can be divided (more or less) symmetrically into two parts, each of which, if it alone survives, is sufficient to constitute the survival of the organism. (This may not be true of human beings; if it is

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[22] "Falling Elevator Model," p. 198. In "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," Zimmerman devotes some effort towards a more precise formulation of the principle, but this material is not essential for the present discussion.

[23] Or perhaps, to constitute the person. The points discussed here are independent of the difference between the identity of person and body, affirmed by van Inwagen and by O'Connor and Jacobs, and a constitution view such as that held by Corcoran or Lynn Rudder Baker.

[24] In 1999 he wrote, "Some will insist that adopting a closest continuer theory of personal identity is just as wildly implausible as supposing that God is a body-snatcher – and, for the record, I am inclined to agree" ("Falling Elevator Model," p. 196f.). Given this, it is a bit difficult to see how Zimmerman can make any positive use of his model, even for the purpose of securing the identity of the resurrection body with the body which died. It may be that Zimmerman's views on closest continuer theories have softened in the intervening decade.

not, imagine whatever modification of human anatomy is required in order to make it possible.) If one part of the divided organism survives, then so does the organism. But if both survive, then they cannot both be identical with the original organism, and the apparent conclusion is that the organism's life has ended, with two successor organisms left in its place. Unless, to be sure, one of the successors has for some reason a better claim than the other to be identical with the original – thus, the "closest continuer." In the Falling Elevator Model, the closest continuer is the body in the resurrection world, because that body alone continues the Life of the person. But any materialist view, Zimmerman contends, can be forced to adopt a closest continuer theory, given that it is possible for person-constituting organisms to be symmetrically divided. Here is Zimmerman's summary of my answer to this argument:

> Hasker's discussion involves Mark, a human–like creature whose cerebrum, brain stem, and so on are neatly divisible. Hasker thinks he has found a way for van Inwagen to maintain that: (a) Mark could survive the destruction of half of his matter, (b) fission along the same plane would result in Mark's death, and (c) (OXY) is true. In the case in which half of Mark's cells are destroyed, Hasker claims that it is not "*consistent with the actual history*" of Mark that an "equal claimant" should have existed. The destruction of half of Mark's cells—the ones which, had they been carefully removed, would have constituted an equal claimant—is "*an event in Mark's own life*," says Hasker.[25]

Zimmerman, however, is not convinced. He replies:

> If this is to represent a way to save (OXY), the claim must be that the events undergone by the series of hunks of matter constituting Mark, in the world that includes destruction of half of his matter, cannot be paired up with intrinsically similar events undergone by a similar series of hunks of matter in a world where Mark undergoes fission. But I do not see why this must be so. Compare two surgeries: in one, an organ is cut away from a living body and simultaneously destroyed; in another, the organ is cut away in the same fashion but preserved for transplantation into another body. There need be no difference between the two surgeries, from the point of view of the

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[25] "Falling Elevator Model Revisited," pp. 41-42; the quotation is from *The Emergent Self,* p. 230.

hunks of matter constituting the patient's body before, during, and after the surgery; intrinsically, the events within the body of the patient will "look" exactly the same. Similarly, when considering just the region occupied by Mark's body, and the events that go on within it when half of its matter is cut away and simultaneously killed, I cannot see why a region *just like that* could not contain exactly similar matter undergoing exactly similar events, when the departing organs are cut away and preserved alive.[26]

Zimmerman, however, has failed to grasp the scenario I was proposing. When I said that half of Mark's cells are destroyed, it was implied that they are destroyed *while they are still part of Mark's body.* (I may not have been sufficiently explicit. However, my reference to "laser surgery" might have suggested the correct interpretation to Zimmerman. There are in fact surgeries where diseased or undesired tissue is destroyed *without* first being removed from the body.) And since the destruction of tissue occurs while the cells are part of Mark's body, there *is not and cannot be,* consistent with this actual history, another "claimant" to Mark's identity. If on the other hand Mark is surgically divided, and subsequently one set of cells is allowed to perish, I would indeed say that Mark has not survived the surgery. We may, to be sure, be thankful that, so far as we know, such procedures are not in the offing for human persons!

In view of this, I stick to my original claim: a materialist such as van Inwagen need not, and since he need not he should not, accept a closest continuer theory of personal identity. I went on to argue that a closest continuer theory is unacceptable because it leads to making identity a contingent relation – but identity that is merely contingent is not *identity*. Now, Zimmerman agrees that a theory that makes identity contingent is unacceptable. He points out, however, that a closest continuer theorist has an alternative to contingent identity, one that is not so clearly unacceptable. (I had alluded to this possibility in a footnote, but did not spell it out or discuss it.) In order to get a grasp on this, consider the situation in which, at the moment of death, an organism has "fissioned" in the way specified by the Falling Elevator Model. There is the original, living person, whom we may call Alphonse. There is the body which is left behind in our everyday world, which we call Boris. And there is the body in the resurrection world, which we shall dub Carlos. (The

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[26] Ibid., p. 42.

introduction of these names is meant to leave it an open question as to what identity relations may obtain between Alphonse, Boris, and Carlos.) Suppose, furthermore, that after the fission (but contrary to the model) Boris and Carlos both continue to live. After this has occurred, we might imagine Carlos saying, "If Boris had not survived I would have been identical with Alphonse, but since he did survive it is he who is identical with Alphonse and I am not." This scenario makes Carlos's identity with Alphonse contingent, and both Zimmerman and I rule it out. But we can also imagine Carlos saying, "Since Boris survived, I exist as an individual distinct from Alphonse, but had he not survived I would not exist." This may strike us as strange, but unlike Carlos's other response it does not make identity contingent, and Zimmerman argues that it does not give us good reason to reject the closest continuer theory. Readers will have to consider whether this does make his model more acceptable; later on I shall present an argument against Zimmerman's use of this idea.

It is time to assess the Falling Elevator Model in the light of this discussion. If (AP2') or some other appropriate version of the assimilation requirement holds, Boris is identical with the body of Alphonse and Alphonse does not survive. Even apart from the assimilation requirement, if the "only x and y" principle holds and closest continuer theories are rejected, the model again fails. According to the model, both Boris and Carlos are candidates for continuing the life of Alphonse – but if so, then it follows from (OXY) that neither is identical with Alphonse; *his* life comes to an end at the point of fission. So for the model to have a chance of success, we must reject both the assimilation requirement and the "only x and y" principle – already a considerable metaphysical cost.

But suppose that neither of these principles states a necessary condition for personal identity over time. Even so, a case can be made that it is Boris, rather than Carlos, which is the best candidate for identity with the body of Alphonse. Even if continuity of matter, and the gradual assimilation of new matter, are not a logically necessary condition for bodily identity over time, it would seem strange to deny that they have weight – indeed considerable weight – in determining which of two otherwise equal competitors is "closest" to the original body. So it would seem that Boris has a substantial advantage over Carlos in this respect, and we should conclude that Boris, rather than Carlos, is identical with the body of Alphonse. Once again, Alphonse does not survive.

The claim made by the model, however, is that the determining factor is that Carlos, rather than Boris, continues the Life of Alphonse, and in view of this it is Carlos who is identical with Alphonse. At last, then, we have Alphonse alive and ready for his eternal destiny! There is, however, a further objection to this scenario. Zimmerman has indicated his support for a "temporally closest continuer" account of identity over time, where a claimant occurring earlier is deemed "closer" than an otherwise equal claimant occurring at a later time.[27] He gives no argument for this view, being content to rely on considerations of general plausibility. Here I propose an argument in support of such a preference – one supporting a conclusion that is stronger than Zimmerman's. Consider, first of all, the variant of the model in which the resurrection is not immediate, but occurs in the future (perhaps the far distant future). Consider, also, the fact that Boris's identity or non-identity with the body of Alphonse is an *essential attribute* of Boris, one that Boris must possess, in a determinate form, at every moment of its existence. As we have learned to say in another context, this is a "hard fact" about Boris at *t,* the moment at which Boris begins to exist. Carlos, however, *does not exist* at *t; at t,* there *is no such thing* as Carlos. (I am assuming a "presentist" view in the philosophy of time, a view that Zimmerman endorses.) Furthermore, there *is no determinate fact* at *t* concerning the future existence or non-existence of Carlos. If it is true that Carlos will exist at a later time *t**, this is a "soft fact" rather than a "hard fact" at *t.*[28] This is so, in spite of the immanent-causal relationship that, according to the model, holds between Alphonse and Carlos. The body of Alphonse may have made its immanent-causal contribution to the existence of Carlos, but it is logically possible that something should occur just prior to the time at which Carlos is to make his appearance that would prevent him from existing, or from existing in the right way to continue the life of Alphonse. (Perhaps a nuclear explosion, detonated just at the spot where Carlos would make his appearance.) But here is the point: *Something that is a hard fact at t logically cannot depend on something that is (at most) a soft fact at t.* It is possible that something should prevent Carlos's appearance at *t**, but if Boris is identical at *t* with the body of Alphonse, it is *not* possible that anything should occur at

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[27] "Falling Elevator Model," p. 206.

[28] Whether there are truths concerning future contingent events is a disputed question among presentists; the argument here does not require an answer to that question.

some later time that would prevent this identity from holding. What this means is, that the appearance of Carlos at t^* is *irrelevant* to the identity of Boris with the body of Alphonse; it cannot therefore *prevent* this identity from holding. We must conclude, then, that Carlos is not in competition with Boris as a continuer for the body of Alphonse; Boris is the only candidate, and so Boris *is* identical with Alphonse's body, and once again Alphonse does not survive.

Further reflection reveals that this conclusion holds even if the "resurrection" is immediate. Now we are supposing that *t,* the moment of fission which marks the beginning of Boris's existence, is also the moment which marks the beginning of Carlos's existence. Since fission occurred at the moment which marks the end of Alphonse's natural life – the moment such that, at any subsequent moment, he would no longer be alive – we must conclude that at *t* neither Boris nor Carlos is alive, though they are still in a condition such that their life-functions could be restored.[29] Now, according to the model, God does restore Carlos's life-functions soon after *t*, and it is in virtue of this that Carlos is the closest continuer of Alphonse, and is identical with Alphonse. But the considerations of the preceding paragraph show that this is a mistake. It is already the case beginning at *t* that both Boris and Carlos determinately exist; their existence is a hard fact. But the restoration of life-functions in the case of Carlos is *not* a hard fact at *t;* that restoration is a contingent event which still lies in the future, albeit the very near future. So for the same reasons given above, that restoration *cannot* play a role in determining the identity relations between Alphonse, Boris, and Carlos. What does play that role is the continuity-of-matter criterion, and that criterion decisively favors Boris over Carlos as the closest continuer of Alphonse. We are still forced to conclude that Alphonse does not survive!

I think it is fair to say at this point that the prospects for the Falling Elevator Model, as presented by Zimmerman, are not very bright. In order for the model to work, all of the metaphysical difficulties set forth above need to be overcome. The result, however, will be a model

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[29] In some of his statements Zimmerman seems to suggest that Carlos is *not* dead – that his life continues, though of course the corpse, Boris, is dead. The view that biological death never actually happens to human beings may well be theologically problematic; certainly it would not be acceptable to van Inwagen. ("It is part of the Christian faith that all men who share in the sin of Adam must die.")

that shares with van Inwagen's model (which it is supposed to replace) the most serious objection to that model, namely that it involves an unacceptable policy of deception on God's part. The only clear advantage, in comparison with van Inwagen, is that the "pseudo-body" that is left behind for the mourners to bury is made of the same "stuff" – elementary particles, parcels of mass-energy, or whatever – that once composed the body of the deceased. This does not seem much of an advantage, given the costs involved – nor does it seem that the prospects for a materialist resurrection are greatly improved by the change.

It remains to consider the variant of the Falling Elevator Model proposed by Timothy O'Connor and Jonathan Jacobs. For the most part, they accept the model as presented by Zimmerman, but there are two significant points of difference. Zimmerman proposed that, at the moment of death, God miraculously confers on the body's particles (or other constituents) the power to immanent-cause particles in the resurrection world. O'Connor and Jacobs say, "We're not so sanguine about the miraculous-addition-of-causal-powers bit, suspecting that it can be bought only by one soft on causation"[30] The thought here is that the fundamental causal powers of any entity are intrinsic and essential to that entity, and cannot be added to without undermining the entity's identity. They continue, however,

> But no mind: we need only suppose that the features of the constituents of Augustine's body – and as these are no different in kind from the constituents of any material thing, of all material things – and the emergent-level aspects of Augustine jointly have a hitherto entirely latent tendency to jointly cause the composing simples to fission in the requisite context, which is providentially connected solely to situations of imminent demise. (Perhaps God miraculously brings to bear some requisite additional force-like factor that acts as a co-cause with the relevant disposition).[31]

This move greatly expands the scope of the "power to fission": instead of being conferred on a relatively few particles (those that constitute the bodies of persons at the time of their death), this power is an *inherent attribute of all the matter in the universe*. But God's special intervention

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[30] "Emergent Individuals and the Resurrection," p. 79.
[31] Ibid., p. 79.

will, one assumes, still be required, both in "triggering" the actual fissioning at the appropriate moment,[32] and in directing the fission products to the appropriate space-time location for the appearance of the resurrection body. Given all this, however, the model still functions in the way proposed by Zimmerman.

The other difference from Zimmerman is of greater moment. They disagree with Zimmerman's inclusion in his model of a closest continuer theory of personal identity, and they disagree with his claim that any materialist view of persons can be forced into accepting such a theory. Their own proposal amounts to a way in which a materialist view can avoid a closest continuer theory, a different way than the one I proposed above. In order to understand this, we need a brief summary of the ontology embraced by O'Connor and Jacobs. The ontology in question is described by them as an "ontology of immanent universals." Each and every substance (for instance, an electron which they dub 'eleanore') involves features or universals that exist in that substance but can also exist in many others. But given this,

> there must be something more to eleanore than a mere cluster of universals, since it is a particular thing, and no cluster of universals can yield particularity. This something extra can only be eleanore's *particularity* or *thisness,* a non-qualitative aspect necessarily unique to it. Eleanore, then, is constituted by a cluster of universals, plus such a particularity, bound in some sort of non-mereological structure, which we shall call a "state of affairs."[33]

Eleanore's particularity or thisness, then, is an ontological constituent of eleanore though not, in the proper sense, a "part" of eleanore. It needs to be noted, however, that these thisnesses are more sparingly distributed in the world than one might be inclined to think. They write,

> Anyone who embraces this ontology in a serious way should posit distinctive particularities in only mereological simples and those composites that

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[32] If not, then the particles must somehow be able to recognize, not only the moment of death, but the fact that the body they jointly constitute is that of a *person,* and thus eligible for immortal existence.

[33] Timothy O'Connor and Jonathan D. Jacobs, "Emergent Individuals," *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 53 No. 213 (2003), pp. 540-55; p. 546.

exhibit some kind of objective, ontological unity. Substances exhibiting ontologically emergent properties are natural candidates. Those lacking such features, however much they may appear to be unified to the uneducated eye, are individual objects only by a courtesy born of practical concerns.[34]

We arrive, then, at a metaphysic that exhibits some striking similarities to that expounded by Peter van Inwagen in his *Material Beings*.[35] What exists are physical simples and some organisms; strictly speaking there are no chairs but only "simples arranged chair-wise."

Here is how this metaphysic addresses questions of personal identity: Each person, whether Augustine, Alphonse, or any one of us, has a particularity as a non-mereological constituent. This particularity is, indeed, what makes each of us a genuine individual, rather than a mere collection of components. And in cases that might otherwise seem ambiguous, it is the particularity that determines which of the two "candidates" continues the life of, and is indeed identical with, a previously existing individual. They write,

> Now, Zimmerman's scenario: Take both of my hemispheres out of my body and put each into a separate body. Which one continues my life? Empirically, they are equally well-suited candidates. But on the soul view, Zimmerman claims, ". . . I went wherever my soul went – either with the one half-brain, or with the other, or with neither, as the case may be."[36] In other words, one hemisphere, at least, will generate a distinct mental substance, while another may continue to sub-serve the previously existing soul, or perhaps also give rise to a new one. These possibilities will be empirically indistinguishable, while being plainly distinct metaphysically. Just so, we say, on our emergentist account: where the entire organism that I am fissions into two living organisms, I may be the one on the left, the one on the right, or neither. There is a fact of the matter, even if it is hard to say what determines which fact it is. . . . Given a situation of perfect symmetry from an empirical/observable point of view, the determining factor could only be a built-in 'bias' (left, right, or neither) to the latent disposition towards fissioning.[37]

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[34] Ibid., p. 547.
[35] Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.
[36] "Falling Elevator Model," p. 198.
[37] "Emergent Individuals and the Resurrection," p. 81.

Symmetrical fission, then, need not be the end of an individual's life, on either view. And in the resurrection case, it is Carlos who is identical with Alphonse, without any need for recourse to a closest continuer view.

Now for our assessment of the O'Connor-Jacobs version of the Falling Elevator Model. Insofar as their version resembles Zimmerman's, it inherits both its assets and its liabilities. Their version, like Zimmerman's, must reject the demand for continuity of matter and the gradual assimilation of new matter, as captured in the assimilation principle (AP2'). It seems, on the other hand, that they have eliminated the other main group of objections, those associated with Zimmerman's adoption in his model of a closest continuer theory of personal identity. To be sure, there is a cost involved in this: in order to accept their model, we must also accept as literally true the ontology they present, or one very much like it. Whether this is a serious problem is a question on which opinions will differ, but it needs to be kept in mind.

Things are not, however, quite that simple. Zimmerman's emergent soul is metaphysically separable from any physical embodiment, so it provides a criterion for personal identity that is independent of bodily continuity. The O'Connor-Jacobs particularity, on the other hand, is the particularity *of a living organic body*, and as such it must go where the body goes. We've seen their suggestion that, in the case of symmetrical fission, there might be a built-in bias that would determine that the particularity ends up in one or the other of the fission products. But what shall we say in the resurrection case, where fission is by no means symmetrical but where there are, nevertheless, serious questions about what has happened to the original body? If the particularity goes with the resulting body that is most similar to the body of the dying person, this view will inherit the difficulties of Zimmerman's closest continuer view, as outlined above. I do not think it will be satisfactory to say that it is God who determines which body inherits the particularity: that is too close to saying that personal identity is determined by divine fiat, which is a view we should want to avoid. Probably we will have to invoke once again a built-in "bias" in the material constituents, but this time a bias towards a body *in the resurrection world,* whatever the other characteristics of such a body might be. It's as though each particle in the universe has built into it a *nisus* or *telos,* such that, *if* an organism of which it is a constituent undergoes fission, then the identity of the

organism will go with the "fission product" in the resurrection world, however remote in time or space, whereas (as we have repeatedly been told) the identity of the *particle* remains behind in the ordinary world. Curiouser and curiouser . . .

One final thought: if O'Connor and Jacobs share Zimmerman's tentative assumption that the body that goes to the next world takes its organs along with it, it will be true for them as it is for Zimmerman, that the body that remains behind after a person's death is a mere replica, something which never lived in the world and never subserved the life-experiences of a human person. This has especially interesting implications in the case of organ transplants: an organ transplanted from the "body" of a deceased person *is not a real human organ; it has never functioned as part of a human body.* Such an organ performs an organic function *for the very first time* after it has been transplanted into the body of a recipient. If by this time your skeptical instincts have not been triggered, I am afraid those instincts have suffered serious atrophy! I am reminded in this connection of a remark made by Zimmerman when he presented an early version of the Falling Elevator Model: "I offer Peter this 'just so story,' to do with as he will, with my compliments. I'm glad I'm a dualist with less need of it."[38] So far, Peter van Inwagen has shown no inclination to take advantage of the assistance thus proffered. I believe, however, than a great many dualists will join Zimmerman in a hearty sigh of relief that "we have no need of this hypothesis."[39]

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[38] Comment on van Inwagen's "Dualism and Materialism," delivered at the University of Notre Dame, November 3 1994.

[39] My thanks to Dean Zimmerman and Jonathan Jacobs for comments on this material.

IN DEFENCE OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC THEISM

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Abstract. I reply to seven objections to anthropomorphic theism: (1) That anthropomorphic theism is idolatrous. In reply I rely on the concept/conception distinction. (2) That faith requires certainty. In reply I argue that full belief may be based on probable inference. (3) That the truly infinite is incomprehensible. In reply I distinguish two senses of knowing what you mean. (4) 'You Kant say that!' In reply I distinguish shallow from deep Kantianism. (5) 'Shall Old Aquinas be forgot?' In reply I discuss the simplicity of God. (6) What those garrulous mystics say about the ineffable. In reply I argue that mystics should be anthropomorphites. (7) Anti-theodicy. In reply I distinguish the community of all agents from the community of finite frail agents.

By anthropomorphic theism I do not mean the thesis that God has a humanoid body, but rather that either God as a whole or the Divine Persons taken individually are literally agents and literally have knowledge and power, and literally have a certain kind of character, being loving or in some other fashion morally good. In academic circles that conception of God is often dismissed as outmoded and naive. In this paper I consider and reply to seven objections to anthropomorphic theism.

My monsters are, in order of the increasingly bizarre, Thomists, Wittgensteinian philosophers of religion – e.g. Dewi Phillips (2005) and Andrew Gleeson (2010) – and Continental philosophers of religion – e.g. John Caputo (1997) and Nick Trakakis (2008). Philosophy is like a horror movie, or one of Descartes' dreams. Once you form a clear and distinct idea of the monster it ceases to be frightening and becomes merely comical – a dyspeptic dinosaur or a grumpy octopus – and the only decision is whether to destroy or domesticate. It is the barely glimpsed and ever changing we-know-not-what that scares us. So for

any proposition whatever to attribute it to, say, Derrida, is to invite the criticism of having misunderstood.

Here are the seven objections, with my replies.

I. THAT ANTHROPOMORPHIC THEISM IS IDOLATROUS

The claim that anthropomorphic theism is idolatrous is, I suspect, based upon the mistaken position that God's greatness is comparative, and so God is praised by a misplaced humility that exaggerates the gap between us and God. But that is just my suspicion. To defeat the charge of idolatry, I need to say something about differing conceptions of God and something about idolatry.

For present purposes I take our concept (definition) of God as that which is worthy of worship, where to worship something is to have an attitude of unconditional trust and obedience. Because this is an evaluative concept we may make the concept/conception distinction (Gaillie 1956, Rawls 1971), keeping the verb 'conceive of' as roughly synonymous with 'describe,' but without the connotation that description is contrasted with evaluation. The *conception*, on the other hand, is the worshipper's conceiving of that in virtue of which the definition holds. Unlike a pure description it might itself be partly an evaluation, so long as it provides more detail than the definition itself. Thus a conception of God might include God's moral goodness, or it might, instead, describe that in virtue of which God is morally good, say God's being loving. Given that the concept of God is that which is (most) worthy of worship, the conception of God must, however, exclude beliefs that are not conducive to the worship. Thus someone could believe in divine simplicity without divine simplicity being part of the conception of God, because, the person believes, it is not part of that in virtue of which God is worthy of worship.

There may be some whose conception of God is of that which is not conceivable in positive terms.[1] Call this the apophatic conception, and

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[1] The positive/negative distinction for predicates is awkward. For some predicates might be neither, (e.g. 'either x is not an agent or x is loving') and some are hard to classify as positive, negative, or neither, notably 'x is simple.' For present purposes I characterise a predicate Fx as positive if either it is itself a natural kind term or for every natural kind

those who have it moderate apophats. More plausible is the position of the radical apophats, who deny the propriety of any conception of God. That is, although they may have various beliefs about God they deny that anything can be said about that in virtue of which God is worthy of worship – God just is worshipful, with nothing more to be said. Others of us – anthropomorphites – have a much more definite conception of God as a morally good agent of unlimited knowledge and power.[2]

To worship God is to risk idolatry, namely worshipping something unworthy of worship, because either it is intrinsically not worth worshipping or because it is less worthy than *something else*. Now, worship takes an intentional object. That is 'S worships X' does not entail that X exists, or even that X is possible. So the phrase 'something else' is ambiguous. It could mean something actual, something possible but not actual, or even something impossible. (Note that because worship takes an intentional object I talk of God as an *object* of worship. This does not imply that God is an object in any other sense.)

I now argue that we anthropomorphites need not be concerned with the claim that an impossibility is worthier of worship than the anthropomorphic God. I note, in passing, that those such as perhaps Caputo's Derrida, or perhaps Caputo himself, who are said to worship something they believe impossible might be interpreted in various ways, for instance as worshipping that for which there are no conceivable grounds for Its possibility (Caputo 1997). Again, they might be worshipping something with contrary properties, for instance justice and mercy defined in such a way as to be inconsistent. Some dialethists such as Graham Priest hold that there are things that exist with contradictory properties, but these are actual and so possible (Priest 1996).[3]

We should ignore impossible objects of worship because we should restrict the concept of idolatry to something that is reasonably prohibited.

K, the Ks that are F is a natural sub-kind. A negative predicate is one whose negation is positive. Using this criterion, 'x is simple' is positive.

[2] Or, in my conception, an agent whose only limitations are freely chosen (Forrest 2007). But this variation on unlimited knowledge and power need not here concern us.

[3] In response to Priest, Derrida said 'When I contradict myself I do not contradict myself.' So presumably Derrida does not believe that 'the other' is an existing but impossible object. If he did he could scarcely call himself an atheist. I also note Bob Meyer who, as far as I know, genuinely believed in a God with inconsistent properties. I owe to him the example of God's justice and mercy.

Alternatively, if you insist it is idolatry to worship a being than which something impossible is worthier of worship then we should distinguish between good and bad idolatry, where good idolatry is not reasonably prohibited and anthropomorphites may agree they are idolaters but of the good kind.

There are two reasons why it is not reasonable to prohibit what I shall now call *pseudo-idolatry*, namely the 'idolatry' of worshipping something less worthy than an impossible object. The first is that non-idolatry (and hence the destruction of idols) is not an end in itself, but a means to the end of proper worship. Now, I say it is unreasonable to require ignorance of its object as a condition for worship.[4] Hence the prohibition of pseudo-idolatry is reasonable only if it is reasonable to worship the impossible knowing it to be so. But although many people have worshipped the impossible, to worship something is to worship It as existing, so it is incoherent to worship something you believe to be impossible.

The second reason for ignoring pseudo-idolatry is that we can explain why idolatry is prohibited. For worship is *unconditional* trust and obedience. Now *conditional* trust etc. is trust etc. that would be withheld if circumstances were different. And when we compare the actual with a hypothetical situation we always assume the hypothetical is possible, unless it is explicitly stated to be impossible.[5] Hence the most that unconditional trust etc. requires is that there be no possibility of something more worthy of worship. Hence pseudo-idolatry is not bad idolatry.

I concede, however, that the properly worshipful must not just be that than which none worthier of worship exists but must be that than which none worthier of worship is possible.[6] Moderate apophats might be interpreted as accusing anthropomorphites of idolatry on the grounds that the apophatic conception is of a greater being than the

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[4] Worship involves trust, and willingness to trust even when it is risky is a virtue. So too much knowledge of the object of worship conflicts with the exercise of a virtue. But that does not show that ignorance is required for worship.

[5] For example, 'I believe time travel to be impossible because if it were possible then the time traveller would be fated to behave in a certain way'.

[6] Unless epistemic possibility is explicitly being considered, possibility is always interpreted as metaphysical possibility in this paper.

latter. They may join radical apophats in accusing anthropomorphites of idolatry on the grounds that nothing we can conceive of would be worth worshipping, even if nothing worthier were possible. Initially I shall interpret the continental philosopher of religion John Caputo (1995) as making this accusation, with which Nick Trakakis (2008) sympathizes.

As a preliminary, I say that the fear of a moderate risk of idolatry should not make us refrain from worship. That would be an instance of tutiorism, the unwillingness to risk performing a sinful act, even for an excellent reason. We should reject tutiorism because of its capacity to interfere with love of self, of neighbor and of God. In particular, we should take a moderate risk of idolatry for the sake of worshipping God.

A reasonable fear of idolatry will, therefore, give careful consideration to various conceptions of God, to see which, if any, result in idolatry. I accuse moderate apophats of idolatry because their conception does not mention that God is good in the moral sense, and we should give unconditional trust and obedience only to the morally good. In this connection I note but regret the human tendency to consider the mysterious worshipful.

Moderate apophats might respond in one of two ways. One is to assert that God is morally good in a way we cannot conceive of. This coheres poorly with the revelation that God is loving, because being loving is a way of being morally good we *can* conceive of. In any case, this response is incompatible with the apophatic conception, which is that there is *no* further detail to be given when conceiving of that in virtue of which God is worthy of worship other than God's inconceivability. To say we can go *one* step further before we cease to be able to conceive is to reject the apophatic conception. The other moderate apophatic response is to deny that God is morally good but instead to say that moral goodness is predicated by analogy of God.[7] I shall discuss analogy below– here it suffices to challenge the apophat to explain just how we can truly apply the predicate 'morally good' by analogy without us being therefore able to conceive of God as 'analogically morally good.'

Far from the moderate apophat having a more worship-worthy conception of God than the anthropomorphite there are reasons, then,

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[7] If Wolterstorff (2010) is right in his interpretation of Aquinas theory of analogy, Aquinas asserts that God is morally good *even though* goodness is predicated by analogy.

why the God of the moderate apophats might be unworthy of worship even if there was no better. Maybe, though, this is to condemn a straw apophat, because actual ones are all radical. Coming closer, I suspect, to the positions of Phillips (2005) and Caputo (1997), I argue against apophats that the anthropomorphite conception is the best we have. For, I say, there is nothing possible we humans can conceive of that is more splendid than a morally good agent, whether human or divine. And if we add that this agent is unlimited in power and knowledge then it is a proper object of unconditional trust, love and obedience, and is that than which nothing worthier of worship can be conceived. Perhaps apophats will complain that it is *possible* there is something greater than anything we can conceive of. I agree that it is epistemically possible – we do not know that it is not the case. But to refuse to worship the anthropomorphic God because we do not know there is no greater is the tutiorism I have rejected – a bit like not having sexual relations with someone who was adopted as a child, because you are not certain the person is not your half-sibling. There is, however, no reason whatever to believe in the metaphysical (as opposed to epistemic) possibility of something worthier of worship than the anthropomorphic God. How could we, unless we can form a definite conception?

I draw the provisional conclusion that unlike the apophatic conception the anthropomorphic is not genuinely threatened with being idolatrous. There is more, though, to the accusation of idolatry. For my provisional interpretation of that accusation by Continental philosophers of religion is not the only one. It is also plausible that anthropomorphites, and analytic philosophers generally, are accused of worshipping a mere construct in place of God. Here I have a problem: I know what I mean by the word 'construct' but I suspect those who use that word freely do not. I shall now explain what I mean in order to show that an unlimited agent is not a construct in this sense.

I follow Meinongians to the limited extent of granting that the quantifier 'some' does not have an existential implication. So some things exist and some things don't. There are some predicates X, notably 'exists' itself, such that the proposition that some Y is X entails that there exists a Y. Call these *existential predicates*. I assume that there is a recognisable class of mental attitude predicates, none of which are existential. I take it, then, that we recognise as standard the use in which atheists grant that

theists worship something even though, they say, we worship something that does not exist.

By a *construct* I mean something of which a mental attitude predicate holds *essentially*. Now the word 'essential' derives from a precise enough piece of medieval philosophical jargon, but it has come to have several meanings. For present purposes the relevant sense is that the mental attitude predicate is part of the conception of God. For example, if you had a conception of God as actually worshipped then God would be a construct. If we are going to treat constructs as idols then this characterisation of a construct should be refined so as to exclude disjunctive, conditional and negative predicates, and so as to treat every mental attitude predicate as a disjunction of the reflexive and non-reflexive case. For instance, something does not have to be possible to be inconceivable; for often we assume that inconceivable things such as (Euclidean) square circles *cannot* exist. But because 'inconceivable' is negative the inconceivable God is not a construct. Nor is Its worship in itself idolatrous. What is idolatrous is the entailed omission of divine goodness.

It is worth checking that paradigmatic social constructions do turn out to be constructs as defined. A coin for instance consists of an object, typically a metal disc, of which the predicate 'widely believed to have a designated monetary value' is part of our concept. That predicate is non-existential because it could be the case that the half-cent coin is widely believed to have a designated monetary value even though there never were any such coins.

Another paradigm of a construct is a promise. A promise is not just a form of words but a form of words conventionally understood as binding. The property of being conventionally understood as binding could well hold of some famous but mythical historical promise.

If it were part of our conception of God that It is that than which no greater *is* conceived of by us, then this God would a construct, because we can conceive of things that do not exist. And I grant that worshipping a construct is idolatry because it is absurd to put unconditional trust and obedience in something that depends on us.

What these examples show is that genuine fear of idolatry should motivate an exercise in analytic philosophy, namely investigating which conceptions of God imply, in perhaps subtle ways that God depends on

us. The conception of God as an agent without any limitations to power and knowledge is not a construct and worshipping such a God is not idolatrous, unless there is some possible thing worthier of worship, which I have denied.

II. THAT FAITH REQUIRES CERTAINTY

Although explanatory power is not part of the anthropomorphic conception of God many have that conception because, they say, anthropomorphic theism provides the best ultimate explanation of things.[8]

This makes theism a metaphysical hypothesis set up as a rival to naturalism, and makes theism the content of a 'reasonable faith.' There is, the objection continues, no way in which the belief that something is the best hypothesis is compatible with the sort of passionate commitment that is faith (Phillips 1995, ch 1). Suppose that the argument for the anthropomorphic God has some precise probability, say 75%. It is then unwarranted to have anything other than a degree of credence equal to that probability, namely 75%. This illustrates the dilemma that, in the absence of strict proof of God's existence, we must either settle for a degree of credence less than full belief, or adopt a passionate commitment to a God who is experienced in our lives. The former is judged inadequate; the latter is subjective in the sense that it is arrived at by each individual for him or herself.

First I note the Protestant background of this complaint, based as it is on the supposed importance of the individual's act of faith.[9] Next, I note the curious asceticism of those who want to make their faith difficult. But even given that background we may respond by denying the wisdom of proportioning belief to the evidence, and with Newman (1903) granting that it is warranted to have full belief ('assent') in that which, considered

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[8] My own preferred speculation is slightly different. I speculate that the ultimate explanation is an unlimited agency *without* any character. It would be idolatrous to worship this God. But, I speculate, It becomes loving and hence worshipful.

[9] I take Kierkegaard as an especially articulate and self-aware proponent of this sort of critique of reasonable faith, especially when it concerned the Incarnation. The criticism being considered is no longer specifically Protestant, because of the individualistic character of 'Western' culture.

as a hypothesis, is supported only by a probable inference. This response may be made more technical by denying that there is a precise probability for the case for anthropomorphic theism. We may then follow Kyburg in treating precise probabilities as a first approximation only, with a better one obtained by measuring probabilities as intervals, as it might be 75% ± K% for some K (Kyburg 1974). To be sure, the precision in the value of K is still somewhat counterintuitive but Kyburg's theory of probabilities is a step in the direction of plausibility. Suppose, for instance, that the case for the anthropomorphic God has probability 75% ± 25%, that is, the interval from 50% to 100%. Then rationality does not specify any degree of belief in that range. [10] Hence a passionate commitment could result in full belief. [11]

III. THAT THE TRULY INFINITE IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Some might reject anthropomorphic theism on the grounds that I claim to know what I am talking about, contrary to the tradition of caution in talking about God. In a sense of course I claim to know what I am talking about, but there is also a sense in which I make no such claim.

Sometimes when we speak we feel confident that we know what we mean. This typically happens when we can clearly imagine what it would be like for what we say to be true, and what it would be like for what we say to be false. There are many ways, however, in which we can talk truthfully of something without this confidence. In those cases we might well say we do not know what we are talking about. One source of examples of this is mathematics. I find it interesting that spheres of different dimensions have quite different characteristics. But I cannot imagine hyper-spheres nor can I follow most of the proofs. Another source of examples is provided by the layperson's use of natural kind terms. Someone might say a lot of accurate things about Uranium 235

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[10] In the absence of any emotion we might well tend to have degrees of belief near the middle of the range, say within 10% of 75%. But to insist on this is to go beyond the argument, which is here assumed to have a probability measured as an interval of 50% width not one of 20%.

[11] For a recent discussion of the conditions under which passional belief is warranted, see Bishop (2007).

and Uranium 238 without understanding even that their nuclei have different number of neutrons. But an example that I think may be more relevant to talking about God is that of a red/green colour-blind person, who can distinguish yellow from blue and asserts that red and green are colours. The colour-blind person can speak about colours and has an imaginative grasp of the yellow/blue contrast, but no imaginative grasp of the red/green contrast.

Now consider the assertion that the Primordial God is an agent, but one without any limitations. Opponents of my anthropomorphic theism may be supposing that I feel the same confidence about knowing what I am talking about when I say God is an agent as when I say I am an agent but deny that Christmas trees are. I do not.

Our capacity to talk about things without knowing what we are talking about should be taken as a datum for philosophy of language not a controversial thesis. Hence it supports those theories of reference that explain this datum. Thus on the Putnam-Kripke causal theory of reference we can apply a natural kind term by referring to the kind, without any knowledge of the kind such as a scientist has (Kripke 1980, Putnam 1973; see also Bird and Tobin 2010). But in many cases we *can* pick out a kind, as the most natural kind exemplified by the paradigms and not exemplified by a contrasting group of anti-paradigms. It's like a treaty between two nineteenth century European countries dividing up some part of Africa, when neither party was familiar with either the region or the people they were impacting on. For instance, a river unexplored by Europeans is the agreed boundary and one power has the right to any islands in this river, even though neither power is sure there are any.

To say more requires both philosophy of language and metaphysics, both of which are controversial. Here is a sketch, based on the theory that perception is a relation to a universal, which is instantiated if the perception is veridical (Forrest 2005). Readers may substitute their preferred theory. To imagine is to stand in a certain relation to a universal that need not have been perceived but must be related to ones that have been using some short list of relations – relations that we also comprehend.[12] I shall use the term 'comprehend' in a narrow sense,

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[12] The least controversial of which is conjunction. These may well be innate in that no experience is required of these relations.

according to which we comprehend what we are able to imagine. Using either language or some pre-linguistic way of thinking, we can think about the universals we comprehend as well as ones that we do not.[13] The latter (which perhaps need not exist) are formed in ways that do not enable us to imagine. For instance, we comprehend causation and we comprehend coming into existence, so we can talk meaningfully about a cause of all that comes into existence, but without comprehension.

Anthropomorphites, then, should not be accused of claiming to comprehend God, merely to be able to describe God as an agent of unlimited power.

IV. 'YOU KANT SAY THAT!'

I have never met anyone who is prepared to defend the arguments that Kant actually relies on in (either edition of) the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Nonetheless it is widely supposed that Kant has undermined both metaphysics and natural theology. I suspect this is a case of 'Non! Je ne regrette rien.'[14] It takes courage to study a difficult author only to declare it a waste of time.

In this situation I challenge would-be defenders of Kant to state arguments against anthropomorphic theism that they are prepared to defend from objections. In addition I consider what it would be like to be persuaded by Kant and so I distinguish shallow from deep Kantianism.

By shallow Kantianism I mean a certain way of putting scare quotes around 'knowledge' and 'truth,' to mean what we naturally but, it is said, mistakenly tend to call knowledge and truth, respectively. By deep Kantianism I mean a theory of truth as a triadic relation between truth-bearers, truth-makers ('things in themselves') and truth-mediators, where the last are dependent on our nature as human beings. Deep Kantians say that truth is relative to truth-mediators in a way that anti-Kantians would consider benighted. Thus, suppose that the best way of understanding

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[13] Maybe *thinking about* is identity in this case. That is, the referring expression in the language of thought is the universal it is about. (I follow Richard Sylvan in using the phrase 'is about' rather than 'refers to' because it is widely assumed that we cannot refer to what does not exist.)

[14] Continental philosophers might like to take Edith Piaf's song as their anthem.

things is a theory that entails the existence of an X or some Xs (Xs might be electrons, say, or, more pertinently the anthropomorphic God). Then the natural tendency is to believe that there exists an X, relying on an inference to the best explanation. And we may be explicit and say that the natural tendency is to say both that we know there exists an X and that 'There exists an X' is true. As an anti-Kantian, I agree, apart from some scruples about calling belief knowledge when sane intelligent people disagree with me. Shallow Kantians, however, are sceptics and deny the capacity of our natural belief-forming tendencies to arrive at truth on such theoretical topics. Shallow Kantians might, like Vaihinger with his philosophy of 'als ob,' live their lives as if there are Xs, and expect it to remain as if there are Xs (1968). This is much the same as 'accepting' that there are Xs in van Fraassen's sense of accepting a theory while suspending judgement as to its truth (1980).

There are several reasons for rejecting shallow Kantianism. The first is that if applied universally it is self-limiting. For it then requires suspense of judgement about shallow Kantianism itself. The second is that the case for shallow Kantianism concerning anthropomorphic theism is weaker than that concerning the theoretical entities of science. For consider Larry Laudan's pessimistic induction: most scientific theories have been shown false so current ones are more likely than not also false (Laudan 1981). We may say that, for instance, Newton's theory of gravity is false but it is mostly as if it is correct. The nearest thing to a pessimistic induction in theology is that over the millennia the number of gods believed in has declined to one and the next step is zero. You might as well argue that because microscopes have been invented that enable us to see smaller and smaller things we will soon be able to see things of zero diameter.

The third, and I think, most serious problem with the application of shallow Kantianism to anthropomorphic theism concerns its extension to other religious beliefs notably the future self-revelation by God. I call this the eschatological objection. On the assumption that it is as if there is an anthropomorphic God then the future divine self-revelation will be as if the anthropomorphic God is revealed. But that is, according to shallow Kantians, concealment not revelation.

Deep Kantians agree with anti-Kantians that we should believe in accordance with our natural tendencies, but – as a result of the systematic application of these tendencies, they say – truth isn't what

we 'naively' thought.[15] In that case we should believe anthropomorphic theism to be true, although not 'naively' true, and hence that there exists an anthropomorphic God.

The only difficulty I envisage given deep Kantianism is a renewed charge of idolatry on the grounds that the anthropomorphic God is less worthy of worship than an unknowable God-in-Itself. My response is that worship is an attitude of unconditional trust and obedience, and that these attitudes are just as much to things-as-they-are-related-to–us as are beliefs. It is not as if we are to change epistemic gear when it comes to religion. Nothing more is required of beliefs than truth, no matter what truth turns out to be.

V. 'SHALL OLD AQUINAS BE FORGOT?'

There was a dispute between those such as Duns Scotus who held that we are able to say some positive things of God and of human beings in a straightforwardly univocal fashion and others, such as Thomas Aquinas, who held that words such as 'good' applied by analogy to God and to humans. This was largely because Aquinas held a strong doctrine of divine simplicity according to which the divine attributes are all identical to God.

First I shall rebut the thesis that predicates such as 'has causal power,' 'has knowledge' and 'is morally good' apply analogically to God. Then I shall undermine the reasons for proposing that thesis.

If we apply analogy in Aristotle's 'pros hen' sense to talking about such a God then we might say that God has causal power, knowledge and goodness in the sense that human causal power, human knowledge, and human goodness are signs of God, just as urine is called (un)healthy if it

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[15] I am supposing a broadly Reidian epistemology based upon trust in the ways of reasoning we tend to use prior to critical reflection. This trust may be defeated using other natural ways of reasoning. The outcome of this process of self-correction cannot be determined by over-arching principles because these principles would themselves be the products of such reasoning. I am conceding that someone might arrive at a Kantian position as a result of this process of self-correction. I suspect, however, that Kantianism results instead from excessive concern with knowledge.

is a sign of (poor) health. (Aquinas uses this example as well as Aristotle, apparently endorsing a sign account of analogy.)[16]

To apply predicate X by analogy to b in this sense might but should not be understood minimally as saying that b brings about Xs. For that would permit any number of silly analogies in the human case: the clapper is by analogy the clap, and so on. Moreover, if we do understand analogy in this minimal fashion it also follows that God is by analogy bad as well as good. For some intrinsically bad things, such as moderate suffering, seem to be part of the divine plan and so are caused by God. And that is not the intention of those who tell us that predicates apply to God by analogy. Now it is tempting to respond that God creates with moderate suffering as part of the design plan, but it is for a good purpose. I agree but that it is to go beyond the minimal account of analogy.

As its rather complex history shows, the theory of analogy asserts more than that God causes various effects. Given the current use of the word 'analogy' it is no surprise that resemblance may be used in the analysis of analogy. This can occur in one of two ways. We might say that the effects of God are like the effects of an agent of a certain kind. Or we might say that God Itself is like an agent of a certain kind. The first amounts to saying it is as if there is an anthropomorphic God, and so turns into shallow Kantianism restricted to God. To go where scholars fear to tread, I speculate that Kant came to say of everything what he already as a Lutheran pietist said of God, or even that Kantianism is what you get when you cross pantheism with pietism. I have already explained why I reject shallow Kantianism and the eschatological objection holds against the as if anthropomorphic theory.

Analogy in its current ordinary sense would have it that God resembles the anthropomorphic God. This is interesting because it raises the question of whether overall resemblance is unanalysable or, as I claim, it holds in virtue of respects of resemblance. In the latter case, predicates corresponding to those respects are predicated univocally of God and human beings. To treat resemblance as unanalysable is a Wittgensteinian thesis. The chief reason for rejecting it is that (1) we do distinguish respects of resemblance and (2) overall resemblance may be analysed in terms of a combination of respects of resemblance and pragmatic

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[16] For a discussion of medieval theories of analogy see (Ashworth 2009.)

considerations, but attempts to analyse respects of resemblance in terms of overall resemblance and pragmatic considerations fail.

Let us now consider the motivation for analogical predication, from the strong thesis of divine simplicity. I submit the case for divine simplicity is only a case for the weaker thesis that the first cause has no parts.

If God has parts, as it might be if the three Divine Persons are themselves gods, then, it is said, God depends on the parts and so is 'ab aliud,' contrary to being the first cause. Again if God has parts then, it might be said, some of these parts could exist without the others, so God would not be a necessary being, as is required for a first cause. Neither of these arguments is beyond criticism, but that is not my present concern, which is the application of them to properties. If properties are treated as particulars, as in the unhappily named 'trope' theory of D. C. Williams (1953) then they are indeed parts of the things that have them. And Aquinas's position may well be a 'trope' theory. But if you are a realist about universals, like Duns Scotus, or a nominalist, like William of Ockham, there is no reason to assimilate properties to parts. Nonetheless there is a genuine problem here. There is no necessary connection between moral goodness on the one hand and power and knowledge on the other. So to hypothesise that unlimited power and knowledge entails goodness is an extravagant hypothesis, unlike the plausible hypothesis that unlimited power requires unlimited knowledge. I have argued elsewhere that goodness is applied to the first cause in an analogical sense only, but that God acquires literal goodness. Putting that to one side I see no reason why the first cause should not be an agent of unlimited power and knowledge.

VI. WHAT THOSE GARRULOUS MYSTICS SAY
ABOUT THE INEFFABLE

I ask the mystic who claims to have experienced (being one with?) God the question, 'What make you think it was God?' It is not possible to experience lack of all limitations. How can we tell the difference between a god (angel) with power over this universe and a God with power over all universes? The mystic runs a more serious risk of idolatry than the anthropomorphite.

To have any assurance that what is experienced is indeed divine the mystic requires a conception of God instead of being the sort of apophat who rejects any such conception. I have already argued against the apophatic conception. I conclude that only by being anthropomorphites may mystics reasonably say that what they experience is so much more than merely having a true description of God.

VII. ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND ANTI-THEODICY[17]

By anti-theodicy I mean the position that theodicy ('justifying God's ways to Man'), whether intellectually successful or not, is a morally obnoxious enterprise (see Trakakis 2008). As I understand it, anti-theodicy is based on the accusation that the theodicist assumes that God is part of our moral community, and that given this piece of anthropomorphism it is both absurd and offensive to offer the usual theodicies such as the free will defence.[18] My response is that there is more than one moral community: there is the community of all agents, to which God belongs, and there is a community of frail, cognitively limited, agents, to which God does not belong. Relative to the first community we should, albeit cautiously, stand in judgment on God, whom I find innocent. Relative to the second community it would be blasphemous to do so.

The anthropomorphic God is an agent, as we are, but unlike us in not being limited in knowledge. Our limitations in this regard explain why for human beings the ends do not always justify the means. For human beings to act so as to maximize expected utility given their beliefs about the future is for them 'to play God'. The anti-theodicist is in effect accusing the anthropomorphic God of playing God.

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[17] See (Forrest 2010) for a more detailed criticism of anti-theodicy.

[18] In analytic philosophy of religion it is common to follow Plantinga and distinguish a defence from a theodicy, the former being merely intended to establish the consistency of a good God creating a universe with many and grievous evils. The distinction is not important here.

CONCLUSION

The current intellectual disdain for anthropomorphic theism is, I have argued, without any basis. It strikes me as 'sour grapes': prematurely despairing of the reasonableness of anthropomorphic theism, the intellectual pretends that this is a crude conception of the divine.

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THEISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. I will discuss some familiar problems in the philosophy of religion which arise for theistic belief. I will argue that it may be most worthwhile to focus on a particular sort of theistic belief, capital-T Theism, central to which is a particular conception both of God and of the believer's relation to God. At the heart of Theism in this sense is the continuing experience of God, both individual and collective. Compared with the evidence for Theistic belief that is provided by this experiential contact with God, most of the usually-considered arguments for and against God's existence are secondary.

Of man's whole terrestrial possessions and attainments, unspeakably the noblest are his Symbols, divine or divine-seeming; under which he marches and fights, with victorious assurance, in this life-battle; what we can call his Realised Ideals. Of which Realised Ideals, omitting the rest, consider only [] his church. The church; what a word was there; richer than Golconda and the treasures of the world! In the heart of the remotest mountains rises the little Kirk; the dead all slumbering around it, under their white memorial-stones, 'in hope of a happy Resurrection':—dull wert thou, O reader, if never in any hour (say of moaning midnight, when such Kirk hung spectral in the sky, and Being was as if swallowed up in darkness) it spoke to thee—things unspeakable, that went into thy soul's soul. Strong was he that had a Church, what we can call a Church: he stood thereby, though 'in the centre of Immensities, in the conflux of Eternities,' yet manlike towards God and man; the vague shoreless Universe had become for him a firm city, and dwelling which he knew. Such virtue was in Belief; in these words, well-spoken: *I believe.* Well might men prize their *Credo*, and raise stateliest Temples for it, and reverend Hierarchies, and give it the tithe of their substance; it was worth living and dying for.

(Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, Book 1, Chapter II)

I.

First we should distinguish *theism* from mere *belief in the supernatural*. The latter, illustrated by ghost-stories, tales of second sight, apotropaic rituals and sacrifices to prevent the failure of a harvest or a navy, the consulting of the sacred geese, and the throwing of the salt always over one's left shoulder, is a human universal, and was pretty well certainly known in one form or another even to our Pleistocene ancestors: *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*.[1] Another name for it, among those who disbelieve in it or are hostile, is superstition.

And the former, theism? The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* says that theism is "belief in a deity or deities, as opp. to atheism"[2]. But—a second distinction—the kind of theism I want to focus on here is more specific than this. Theism in my sense, Theism with a capital T, is belief not in *deities* but in *God* with a capital G. This is a much less universal phenomenon than supernaturalism/superstition. It has a historical particularity; in the case that unites the histories of first Asia, then Europe and Africa, then the Americas, and finally Oceania, the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition,[3] we can more or less see where Theism begins. It begins with the writing of the first chapter of *Genesis*, where the author makes it as clear as he knows how that the God of whom he speaks, *Yahweh*, is not just another heavenly being like the sun or the moon, but the sun and moon's creator.[4]

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[1] "It was fear that first made gods in the world", Statius, *Thebaid* 3.661.

[2] Third edition, 1933, Oxford: Clarendon Press, *sv*. In a separate entry, the *SED* also says that theism is a "morbid condition" "caused by excessive tea-drinking". No doubt Anglicanism is the secret connection here.

[3] In discussing this tradition I shall talk mostly about the Christian part of it. No offence lies, I hope, in speaking mainly of what I know. Perhaps there would be offence in speaking ignorantly of what I do not know.

[4] Of course it is likely that Theism emerged from a world view in which there was "one Big God and many sub-deities, where the latter are personified attributes or aspects of the nature of the Big God. The unsophisticated can take the sub-gods seriously and worship them; the sophisticated can still be intellectually monotheists, but allow the sub-god cults on practical or aesthetic grounds. Hinduism seems to work like this [today]. So did Yahwism . . . where the 'host of heaven' was understood to be the gods of the Gentiles, also identified as angels and planetary powers, who each had their allotted sphere of authority under Yahweh; but Israel had direct access to the Big God through the Torah." (From correspondence with Jeffrey John, to whom thanks.)

The difference between Theism as belief in *God* and theism as belief in *deities* is that the latter can easily be just another variety of supernaturalism. Especially where the deities are small and local enough, there seems little difference in principle between believing in such deities and believing in fairies or ghosts: think of nature-gods like Iris the rainbow-goddess, or Freya/Persephone of the harvest, or Thor the thunder-god. The classical pagan gods were very frequently of this sort, as were the deities of pagan Norway and Britain and Mexico. In another common pattern, pagan deities arose by "euhemerising" apotheosis—by the route from being a human hero to occupying yet another alcove in the cluttered and haphazard pantheon of (say) the Rome of late antiquity. This was a route, indeed, that mortal Roman emperors regularly trod. Even Greek generals sometimes took it too.[5]

The contrast between any such view and what I am calling Theism, as it showed up in the late-Roman context, is well put by the great French historian Paul Veyne. He notes first the "gigantism" of the Christian Theists' God:

> The originality of Christianity lies not in its so-called monotheism[6] but in the gigantic nature of its god, the creator of both heaven and earth: it is a gigantism that is alien to the pagan gods and is inherited from the god of the Bible. This biblical god was so huge that, despite his anthropomorphism (humankind was created in his image), it was possible for him to become a metaphysical god: even while retaining his human, passionate and protective character, the gigantic scale of the Judaic god allowed him eventually to take on the role of the founder and creator of the cosmic order. (Veyne p.20)

Besides this "gigantism," it was the "human, passionate, and protective character" of the Christians' god that, Veyne argues, set Christian Theism apart from the chaotic polytheism of the surrounding society. There one found only an ill-defined assortment of quirky, sinister,

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[5] In the Roman world, one thinks at once of the posthumous cult of Divus Augustus and of pretty well every later pagan emperor—as ironically referred to by Vespasian on his death-bed: "I think I am about to become a god". Apotheosis was rarer in the classical Greek world, but there is the story of Alexander at the shrine of Zeus Ammon in Egypt "hearing" that he is Zeus's son, or Lysander being accorded divine honours in Samos: see http://www.iranica.com/articles/lysander . (Thanks to Elton Barker for discussion.)

[6] Veyne doubts that Christianity is strictly speaking monotheistic.

unpredictable, highly localised, and at best conditionally benign daemons. But here was a universal and omnipresent God of "infinite mercy," caring unconditionally "about the fate of each and every human soul, including mine and yours," with whom what was on offer was "a mutual and passionate relationship of love and authority" (Veyne p.23). As Veyne shows, there was a huge difference between the effects of the two religions on the working psychology of anyone actually practising either. And that contrast nearly always worked in Theism's favour.

> For whoever accepted the Christian faith, life became more intense, more organised, and was placed under greater pressure. An individual had to conform to a rule that marked him or her out . . . in exchange, his or her life suddenly acquired an eternal significance within a cosmic plan, something that no philosophy or paganism could confer. Paganism left human life exactly as it was, an ephemeral amalgam of details. Thanks to the Christian god, that life received the unity of a magnetic field in which every action and every internal response took on a meaning, either good or bad. This meaning . . . steered the believer towards an absolute and eternal entity that was not a mere principle but a great living being. (Veyne p.19)

Theism is just this combination of belief in an absolute and all-powerful God, utterly external and *out there* ("transcendent"), who is yet also intimately known *within* the believer ("immanent") as moral authority, direction for life, warning or encouraging adviser, saviour, answerer of prayers, friend—sometimes even as lover. To any more austerely classical pagan mind, even the Theist's belief that his God answered prayer is likely to have seemed an absurdity: *Dios gar dysparaitêtoi phrenes*.[7] As for the fact that the Theist's relationship with God could be conceivable in romantic or even quasi-erotic terms, to any rationalistically-minded outsider this must seem one of the most astonishing, not to say outrageous, things about Theism. Yet the evidence, across the whole spectrum of different Theist traditions, is quite unequivocal.[8]

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[7] "For prayers do not deflect the mind of Zeus", Aeschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus* 34.

[8] Just for starters: Rabindranath Tagore addresses his God (who, as often in sophisticated forms of the ostensibly polytheistic religion Hinduism, is pretty clearly the God of Theism) as "beloved of my heart," Jalal ud-Din Rumi writes that "Our death is our wedding with eternity," Jesus calls himself, and John the Baptist calls him, the bridegroom, St Teresa of Avila's *The Interior Castle* is an entire book (one of many) on

It is this combination of immanence and transcendence that makes the Theist view so psychologically compelling. If I adopt Theism then even within little me there will lovingly dwell the God of *everything*—as in the manger at Bethlehem, or as in Mary: "For he that is mighty hath done great things in me, and holy is his name" (Luke 1.49). It is easy to see how this combination serves, to give the believer a sense of the importance of his life and actions: "the vague shoreless Universe" has "become for him a firm city, and dwelling which he" knows. Many scholars think that Christian moralists make more than the classical pagans did of the virtue of humility. If that is so, perhaps it is because those who dare to believe that their own small hearts can become the dwelling-place of the infinite God have the more need of humility.[9] Throughout history the Theists' version of this idea of the divine indwelling or *enthousiasmos*,[10] with the cosmic importance of the quotidian as its corollary, has seeded megalomania, self-deception, self-absorption, fantasism, fanaticism, spiritual fascism, and psychological manipulation and abuse. It has also been one of the principal sources of most of the permanent cultural achievements of our civilisation.

At the heart of Theism, transcendence combines with immanence in the intoxicating thought that the infinite is also the intimate: God himself has a plan even for my life. Constantine had this belief—Veyne p.51 quotes him telling the Council of Nicaea his reasons for thinking that he is "particularly distinguished by a special decision of Providence." (And

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the mystical marriage of the soul to Christ, John Donne says in a famous Sonnet that he will be "nor ever chaste, except thou ravish me," Simone Weil remarks, apparently quite casually, that "le mystique tourne violemment vers Dieu la faculté d'amour et de désir dont l'énergie sexuelle constitue le fondement physique" (SW, cited on p.41, tome VI, vol.2), and then in the Bible there is Psalm 45, and the forsaken bride of Hosea and deutero-Isaiah, and more than one Gospel parable, and "the wedding feast of the lamb" in *Revelation*—and the *Song of Songs*. (Rabbi Akiba: "The whole world is worth less than the day on which the *Song of Songs* was given to Israel . . . all the scriptures are holy, but the *Song of Songs* is the Holy of Holies".)

[9] Compare also the Kantian thesis that the Enlightenment deity Universal Reason can find a lodging place even within me: see my "Intuition, system and the 'paradox' of deontology," pp.271-288 in Julian Wuerth and Lawrence Jost, ed., *Perfecting Virtue* (Cambridge: CUP 2011), at p. 283.

[10] The word is pre-Christian Greek. It is not only Theists who have believed that gods can enter the human breast: see e.g. Euripides' *Bacchae*. Or that divine action on humans can be quasi- or actually erotic: see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

who can say that Constantine did not have good reason to think so?)
William Gladstone had this belief: see the citations from his diaries in
Roy Jenkins' biography. Jesus and St Paul and Augustine and Mohammed
and Aquinas and St Francis and Martin Luther and John Calvin and John
Knox and Ignatius Loyola and Blaise Pascal and Isaac Newton and René
Descartes and John Wesley and David Livingstone and Gerard Manley
Hopkins had this belief. I believe it myself. Every believer who has ever
taken himself to receive divine guidance, as millions constantly do, has
had this belief. Once the belief becomes credible, its attraction is almost
irresistible.

This brilliant and seductive psychological appeal both to our sense
of smallness and to our sense of greatness is the reason, Veyne argues,
why Christianity won out in its battle with the feeble, syncretistic, and
disaggregated supernaturalism of paganism; the contrast revealed
Christianity as quite simply a better-designed religion. To use Veyne's
word, a *masterpiece*:[11]

> Certain agnostic historians may think it less than scholarly to draw up
> a comparison between the merits of different religions. But . . . to do so is
> not to violate the principle of axiological neutrality any more than one does
> when one recognises the superiority of certain artistic or literary creations,
> a superiority to which Constantine's contemporaries were no more blind
> than we ourselves are. Why ever should the creative imagination of religions
> not produce masterpieces, likewise? (Veyne p.18)

II.

If our concern is not (like some busy contemporaries) to denounce
Theism but to understand it, it is the perspective afforded by this notion
of the Infinite Intimate that we need to start from.

Most philosophers routinely don't start from any such perspective, or
even ever reach it. They start from a dictionary definition like the *SOED*'s.
They take the heart of Theism to be, not a history of vivid and direct
experience of an infinite God who has a plan even for finite you, but the

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[11] I write as a Christian—quoting Veyne, who writes as an atheist and sometime
communist.

proposition that "There is some god or gods." They marshal arguments for and against this proposition. And so we get the familiar does-God-exist debates of contemporary philosophy, in which God so incongruously shows up as a possibly-missing component in the mechanics of cosmology or evolution, part of a botched attempt at scientific explanation. Or philosophers note the troubling tension between the Theist's doctrine of the goodness of the creator and the datum of the badness of large tracts of the creation, recast doctrine and datum alike as propositions, and look for a *tertium datur* to resolve the clash: and so we get the problem-of-evil literature. Or philosophers take the nub of the Theistic doctrines of God's omnipotence or omniscience, or the specifically Christian doctrine of the Trinity, to be, likewise, a matter of propositions; and here again they draw our attention to the logical difficulties attending those doctrines, considered as concatenations of propositions.

The problem with this abstractly propositional approach is not that it is *wrong*. The problem is that, pursued in isolation, it tends to miss the foundational role of experience in Theism.

> To be a Christian is to know, however deep down, and however much we forget from day to day, that our relationship with Christ is everything. Perhaps too many Christians bang on too loudly about their 'personal relationship with Jesus,' so that it sounds fake and superficial. But equally, perhaps, too many Christians keep quiet about it. Because it is true that this is the heart of it—everything else is no more than commentary. And to work on that relationship—to give it 'quality time,' to pay attention, to listen, to try to please the Beloved—is no less important than in a human marriage. (Jeffrey John, *The Meaning in the Miracles* (Norwich: Canterbury Press 2001), p.54)

Consider two aspects of experience, one having to do with the *epistemic position*, the other with the *diachronic* nature, of the Theist's beliefs. First, the epistemic position.

Consider someone who, like us all I assume, lives her life in the midstream of a constant deluge of the best evidence she could possibly have that external-world scepticism is false: experiential evidence. An abstractly propositional approach to external-world scepticism is bound to look slightly strange to any such person. Certainly someone in this epistemic position can *understand* sceptical doubts, explore them with

interest and engagement, note with surprise—or perturbation—the difficulty of conclusively rebutting any argument of, e.g., this form:

1. If I do not know that no evil demon is deceiving me, then I do not know that I have hands.
2.   I do not know that no evil demon is deceiving me.
3. So I do not know that I have hands.

Can she take such sceptical doubts seriously? Is it possible to her that external-world scepticism might be *true*? It is hard to see how it could be, for the reason identified by G. E. Moore[12]: because her justification for denying the conclusion of the sceptical argument (3) is so much better than any justification she could possibly have for accepting its premises (1, 2). She is *certain* she has hands. If her alternatives are to deny that she is certain, or to deny one of the sceptical argument's premises, then she has every reason to pick the second alternative. She may not know *which* premise is false, but her certainty about the falsehood of (3) means that she is completely rational, and completely justified, in asserting "Not ((1) and (2))." Sceptical arguments like (1-3) may set her intriguing intellectual puzzles; they may even provide her with a livelihood writing about them. What they will not do is threaten her basic confidence that, for instance, she does indeed know she has hands.

They might threaten her assurance of that if it was a whole lot weaker, or if her epistemic position were strictly neutral—if she was antecedently disposed simply to consider each proposition on its logical merits in the abstract, and not disposed to take any proposition whatever to be any more or less sure than any other. But her position is precisely not neutral in this way. And the case of the Theist is parallel. As I put it above, the person considering external-world scepticism "lives her life in the midstream of a constant deluge of experiential evidence" for the existence of an external world. That sets her so far from abstract epistemic neutrality that she has every justification for weighting external-world scepticism as no more than an intriguing intellectual puzzle. Similarly, the defining feature of Theism is the Theist's experience of an infinite but intimate God; and this sets the Theist so far from abstract epistemic

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[12] In "Our knowledge of the external world", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 1939.

neutrality that she too has every justification for weighting most of the standard budget of problems for Theism found in typical philosophy of religion basically as interesting puzzles. The epistemic reasoner is certain that the world is real, on the basis of her experience; so her question about the sceptical argument is not "I wonder whether it is sound?" but "I wonder where exactly it goes wrong?." The Theist is certain[13] that God is real, on the basis of *her* experience; so her question about anti-Theistic arguments is not whether they prove that there is no God, but how exactly they fail to prove that.

Contemporary opponents of Theism tend to assume that everyone who is rational starts in the same epistemically neutral place, and assesses the arguments for Theism, in the timeless abstract, from that epistemically neutral place. We might ask whether this epistemic neutrality even exists, and what use it would be to us if it did. That aside, when someone is rationally assessing an argument, the fact that her background beliefs include strong reasons for thinking that the argument's conclusion cannot be true is no objection to her rationality. The best arguments for external-world scepticism may be good arguments indeed. That does not mean that they should convince anyone. Normal people have *overwhelmingly good* evidence in their own experience that there is an external world, and reasonably take this to "epistemically outweigh" even the best arguments going for external-world scepticism. Likewise, the best arguments against Theism may be formidable, yet completely unpersuasive to a Theist—even a rational and fair-minded Theist. The whole point about Theism is that it claims that individuals can have overwhelmingly good experiential evidence that there is a God. To allow this experience to "epistemically outweigh" even the best anti-Theist arguments is no less reasonable than the analogous move against external-world scepticism.

This notion of epistemic position helps us to understand the spirit in which Theists from strongly Theist societies like Anselm and Aquinas offer arguments for God's existence. They do so in something like the

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[13] I do not mean to underplay the reality of doubt in religious experience, which happens to all believers some of the time, and some believers all of the time. Yet the fact that doubt happens does not undermine the basic fact I am insisting on here: that an experiential certainty of the reality of God (perhaps a fluctuating one) is *characteristic* of Theism. (Thanks to Jeffrey John for discussion.)

same spirit as contemporary epistemologists who do not really doubt the external world's existence for a moment offer anti-sceptical arguments for the existence of an external world. In both cases the arguments that p are not evoked by a live doubt whether p, but rather by an interest in exploring alternative possible structures of argument that might or might not support the undoubted truth that p. Perhaps we might even say that arguments about God's existence are to the pre-Cartesian philosophical world as arguments about the external world's existence are to the post-Cartesian.

The notion of epistemic position also illuminates some familiar *impasses* in present-day debates about the philosophy of religion. For instance, critics of Theism sometimes struggle even to see their Theist interlocutors as rational, as dealing in the currency of arguments. It is sometimes cynically said that the conclusion is "the point in the argument where you stop thinking." Cynicism aside, different reasonable people can have different good reasons for being content to reach their rational resting-places at different lemmas. One respectable source of these different good reasons is different backgrounds of experience. So the atheist who finds some purely logical problem in the notion of God's omnipotence, e.g. that a God who "could do anything" neither could nor could not create a stone too heavy for Himself to lift, may conclude straight away that there cannot be a God. Whereas a Theist, confronted with the same problem, may respond "Oh, how interesting. So God's omnipotence must be beyond our understanding"; or "Ah, OK, so there is *one* thing that God can't do—but He is otherwise omnipotent," or "Well, this thing has a logically inconsistent description, so of course God can't do it";[14] or "Oh, so perhaps omnipotence is not what matters in thinking about God"[15]—or in some other way may qualify her understanding of what God *is like*, without in any way weakening her confidence that God *is.* This tenacity about God's existence may (to repeat) be perfectly rational; as if it is based upon overwhelmingly good experiential evidence

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[14] For what it's worth this is my own response (there are plenty of others) to this old chestnut. The task that it sets for God has this description: *to create a stone that cannot be lifted by an agent who can do anything.* The inconsistency in this description is obvious.

[15] So Peter Geach, who prefers to talk about "almightiness," in his "Omnipotence" [1973], pp.63-75 in Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings, Oxford University Press, 1998.

of God's existence. That evidence does not come into the argument about the coherence of the doctrine of omnipotence. But it does, so to speak, "wait outside" the argument, to evaluate its conclusion. And someone who lacks this evidence will reasonably form a different evaluation of that conclusion from someone who has it.

I said that Theists can have "every justification for weighting most of the standard budget of problems for Theism found in typical philosophy of religion basically as interesting puzzles." *Most*, I said, because one standard problem in philosophy of religion is bound to be grievously more than a mere intellectual puzzle. This is the classic problem of evil.

> God, says Epicurus, either wishes to prevent evils, and is unable; or he is able, and is unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able; or he is both willing and able. If he is willing and is unable, he is weak, which does not fit the character of God. If he is able and unwilling, he is malevolent, which does not fit God's character either. If he is neither willing nor able, he is both malevolent and weak, and therefore not God at all. If he is both willing and able which alone is fitting for God, from what source then are evils? Why does he not prevent them? (Lactantius, *de Ira Dei* (c.313 AD); the first extant formulation of Epicurus' version of the problem of evil)

Evidently Epicurus' puzzle was presented as a puzzle for believers in a God of good providence: the Stoics' God, or Lactantius' own Christian God. (Epicurus seems not to have presented it, as people often present it today, as a puzzle for believers in *God*. Epicurus himself apparently believed in God, just not a providential or caring one.)

Epicurus' puzzle is an intellectual puzzle, but it is not *merely* an intellectual puzzle. To any feeling person, the existence of evil in our world must create an emotional struggle as well as an intellectual puzzle. Theists suppose that there is a God who is good enough to want the very best for his creatures, and powerful enough to do anything He chooses. *So why in Heaven's name doesn't He choose to do the very best?*

One striking thing about this question is how much time Theists themselves spend asking it, while being altogether unable to answer it.[16]

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[16] Indeed, Theists are often not at their best—to put it mildly—when they think they *do* have "the" answer to the problem of evil; as Voltaire famously pointed out in *Candide*, with specific reference to Leibniz.

Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in time of trouble? (Psalm 10.1)

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him, and that thou shouldest visit him every morning—and try him every moment? (Job 6.17-18)

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? And why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worst, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause…

(Gerard Manley Hopkins; cp. Jeremiah 12.1)

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Psalm 22.1/ Mt 27.46)

If the answer is infinite light
Why do we sleep in the dark? (Paul Simon[17])

Or, if I may be forgiven for quoting a poem of my own, "The Children's Cemetery, Balgay":

Parents' sentences on marble;
mildewed dolls beneath grown trees:
O you who mark the sparrow's fall,
did you not notice these?

You could call the whole Judaeo-Christian Theistic tradition a tradition of complaining at God. Stephen Fry, himself partly Jewish, somewhere[18] has a fictional character (also Jewish) describe the Jews as "his stupid, moaning, helpless and cosmically irritating people." Perhaps that is how most Theists seem to God Himself.

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[17] Paul Simon, "How can you live in the northeast?" on his 2006 album *Surprise* (Warner).

[18] Stephen Fry, *The Hippopotamus* (London: Hutchinson, 1995), p.218.

This Theistic moaning tells us something important about Theism and the problem of evil. The critic of Theism quite often notices that she makes little or no impression on Theists by simply announcing a list of worldly mishaps, be they never so dire. The critic may conclude that Theists just display a mulish imperviousness to empirical evidence. For the Theist, however, this sort of evidence is irrelevant. *Pace* John Stuart Mill,[19] Theists do not arrive at their Theism by doing a "value-audit" on creation: totting up the net balance of good and evil in creation, inferring that the net balance of good and evil in any Creator would have to be just the same, and concluding either that there is a universally good Creator and the discordant partial evil in the world is only "harmony not understood," or that there is no such Creator, or that the Creator is either morally ambiguous or just plain evil. Their Theism was, so to speak, *already there* before they even considered how things stand with the world. And it rests upon quite a different ground from any calculus of good and bad fortune in the world that might be devised; the ground of experience.

Hence Theists see the problem of evil too from a quite different epistemic position from their critics. It is not that Theists—unless they are intolerably naïve, smug, and callous—do not see evil as a problem. But it is that Theists see evil as a problem *in time*: a *diachronic* problem.[20]

Suppose you have a friend whom you trust deeply, on the solid evidential basis of your long and vivid experience of that friend's care for you. One day you find very strong evidence that that friend has betrayed you in some fundamental way. Is there only one rational response to this new negative evidence: to weigh the new negative against your past positive evidence and decide which counts for more?

You might think so if you were considering the question in abstraction from time, as a straight inconsistency in the propositions that constitute

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[19] J. S. Mill, "Essay on nature," at http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/philosophy/texts/mill_on.htm: "If a tenth part of the pains which have been expended in finding benevolent adaptations in all nature had been employed in collecting evidence to blacken the character of the Creator, what scope for comment would not have been found . . ." Thanks for the reference to Peter Cave.

[20] I think it is a narrative problem too. I do not have space to pursue this here, but see Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* (OUP 2010), especially her distinction between "Dominican" and "Franciscan" philosophical reasoning at the beginning.

your evidence. But suppose you look at your evidential problem about your friend, as of course you in fact will, as a diachronic problem, a problem in time. Then you will immediately see that you have two further salient options besides insisting on reaching a verdict, right now, on nothing but the present balance of evidence. One option is to wait and see how things turn out. If you just hold off a little, then maybe a good explanation of your friend's apparent betrayal will soon become clear to you. The other option is *to confront your friend*. Track him down, explain how things look to you, see what he has to say for himself. In short, have a good moan at him, and see how he takes it.

Both these responses to a trusted friend's apparent betrayal seem just as rational as insisting on reaching an immediate verdict about that apparent betrayal without waiting or looking for more evidence. Indeed in imaginable particular cases, they will often be far *more* rational. Their rationality depends, broadly speaking, on how good are your antecedent reasons for trusting the friend.

Just likewise with the Theist's response to the problem of evil. Hers too is in no way an irrational response to the epistemic conflict confronting her as a result of that problem. She does not find herself atemporally confronted with the raw propositions "There is a morally perfect and omnipotent creator God" and "There is evil in the world," and challenged to find a way to reconcile them or weigh them off against each other in the abstract. Rather, the problem of evil typically comes to the Theist within the time-series of her experience and her life. First there is her experience of God; then there is the fact that she is confronted by some particular evil, perhaps by horrifying evil. But the time-series does not stop there. It goes on, and that gives the Theist her chance to wait and see what God might *do* about the evil that confronts her—and indeed to moan at God about it.

This is precisely what Theists have always done, confronted with some evil.[21] This is what the Psalmist means by "my soul waits upon the Lord," an attitude that he clearly thinks is not just possible, but imperative, even in the most exigent circumstances, and even when God appears to do *nothing* about the evil facing her.

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[21] Often they can also do something about the evil themselves, and so provide the answer to their own prayers. Nothing I say here is meant to rule out or occlude that possibility.

> Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress: so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. (Psalm 123.2-4)

I say "confronted with *some* evil." There is a distinction between specific evils that confront Theists in specific cases, and evil in general—the sum total of evil in the whole world—that confronts the Theist all the time. But the problem of evil is about *evil*, and both specific evils and evil in general are varieties of that. Evil in general is a much bigger and less tractable problem than specific evils, but the theist's attitude to both general and specific evil is essentially the same. It is that you have to see it as something that happens at some point in time; and that you have to either wait patiently, or bother God impatiently, about it until God has provided a resolution.

> What we must completely get away from is the idea that the world as it now exists is a rational whole. We must think of its unity not by the analogy of a picture, of which all the parts exist at once, but by the analogy of a drama where, if it is good enough, the full meaning of the first scene only becomes apparent with the final curtain; and we are in the middle of this. Consequently the world as we see it is strictly unintelligible. We can only have faith that it will become intelligible when the divine purpose, which is the explanation of it, is accomplished. (Archbishop William Temple, quoted in Iremonger, 1948, pp. 537–8)

Central to the Theist's outlook is an attitude of hope.[22] Such hope might be misplaced or over-optimistic, of course. But is a hopeful attitude to the world so very obviously less rational than thinking of the world as so botched, maimed, and incompetent that any "God" who had made it would deserve only our hatred and contempt? Even if it *were* less rational, mightn't it still suggest a better, because more humane, way to learn to live?

> [What a humane education is most deeply concerned with] is the possibility of coming into an inheritance. It has to do with no less a question than whether

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[22] On hope cp. my "Why is faith a virtue?," *Religious Studies* **32** (1996), pp.27-36; reprinted (2002) in Charles Taliaferro and Philip Quinn, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to the Philosophy of Religion*.

a man can be at home in the world—whether he can find it a good world
despite the ill. Not that I am supposing that there is a kind of education that
could guarantee the outcome, but rather this: by being brought into contact
with forms of understanding . . . in which some good is to be encountered,
some wonder to be seen, whether in nature or the work of human beings,
a person might be helped to see the beauty of reality, helped to live more
fully, helped to be glad that he is alive. (Roy Holland, *Against Empiricism*
(Oxford: Blackwell 1980), p.59)

The last thing to say about the diachronic conception of the problem of
evil is to add that in quite a number of cases of specific evils that they
have experienced, Theists in practice are very likely to say that God *has*
provided a resolution. They found themselves in some crisis or other;
and they either waited to see what God would do, or bothered God about
the crisis, or both; and God *did* do something about it. That is what
Cromwell's followers, John Milton for example, said about the founding
of the English "Commonwealth" in 1649; it is what most English people
thought about the defeat of the Armada in 1588, and what a substantial
proportion of the English thought about Bonaparte's failure to invade in
1798 and Hitler's failure to invade in 1940; it is what many believers on
the run from a whole variety of psychotic regimes have said about their
experience of (as they saw it) being protected from capture and death; it
is what millions of obscure believers have taken to happen in their own
experience at all sorts of life-junctures—finding a spouse, for example;
most saliently of all to a Christian, it is what Jesus' disciples said about
the resurrection.

The point here is not whether such claims made by Theists are
contestable or not (of course they are contestable). The point is only that
they are entirely characteristic of Theism. In this respect as in so many
others, real Theism could not be less like the caricature Theisms that
so often dominate philosophical debate—for instance, Antony Flew's
undetectable gardener.[23] *Pace* Flew, Theists typically take their God to
be a highly detectable gardener. Indeed they think they've detected him.
Or he them.[24]

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[23] Antony Flew, „Theology and Falsification," *University*, 1950-51.

[24] Thanks for their comments to Chris Belshaw, Nick Everitt, Jeffrey John, Eleonore
Stump, and an audience at the University of Northampton.

THEODICAL INDIVIDUALISM

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Abstract. In this journal Steve Maitzen has recently advanced an argument for Atheism premised on Theodical Individualism, the thesis that God would not permit people to suffer evils that were underserved, involuntary, and gratuitous for them. In this paper I advance reasons to think this premise mistaken.

I.

According to Jeff Jordan, 'Theodical Individualism asserts that God permits human persons to suffer only if "the sufferings of any particular person are outweighed by the good which the suffering produces *for that person.*"' He suggests the view enjoys 'prominent support' amongst philosophers of religion. Amongst those whom he cites as supporters, Eleonore Stump has given Theodical Individualism more precise shape in her claim, quoted by Jordan, that "if a good God allows evil, it can only be because the evil in question produces a benefit for the sufferer and one that God could not produce without the suffering."[1] I say 'more precise shape,' as Stump's formulation brings out the fact that one sort of suffering the broader intuition behind Theodical Individualism suggests

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[1] Jeff Jordan, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 56: 169-178, (2004), p. 171-172. The philosophers he cites in support are Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999): pp. 29-31; William Rowe, 'The Empirical Argument from Evil' in *Rationality, Religious Belief, & Moral Commitment,* pp. 244-245; Eleonore Stump, 'Providence and the Problem of Evil' in T. Flint, (ed.) *Christian Philosophy,* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990): pp. 65-68; and Michael Tooley, 'The Argument from Evil' in J. Tomberlin (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives* 5, *Philosophy of Religion,* (1991): pp. 110-111. The quotation from Stump comes from Eleonore Stump, 'The Problem of Evil' *Faith and Philosophy* 2(4) (1985), p. 411.

God will not allow is that which whilst benefiting the sufferer more than it harms him or her is nevertheless gratuitous in the sense that the benefit could have been achieved in another way.

More recently, Stephen Maitzen, whilst dropping the notion of non-gratuity from his formulation, has still further specified Theodical Individualism with the claim that the category of suffering which it requires God to avoid permitting is only that which is *involuntary* on the part of the sufferer. As he puts it, 'Necessarily, God permits undeserved, involuntary human suffering only if such suffering ultimately produces a net benefit for the sufferer.'[2] Maitzen makes his qualification of the principle because he sees 'nothing wrong with the idea of God's permitting undeserved suffering that people deliberately choose to endure for, say, the benefit of others without gaining for themselves a net benefit from it.'[3] According to Maitzen then, God *might* allow undeserved suffering that is genuinely gratuitous from the point of view of the individual undergoing it as long as it is voluntarily accepted by him or her and – one presumes[4] Maitzen would insist – as long as it is voluntarily accepted for the good reason that it is *not* gratuitous *sub specie aeternitatis*. Such justified evils then would be gratuitous *vis a vis* the individual undergoing them but non-gratuitous *vis a vis* the set of individuals of which the individual in question is a part. So, some evils ruled out by Jordan's/Stump's understanding of Theodical Individualism would be allowed by Maitzen's. The Theodicist will have an easier time of it if Maitzen is right. Is he? I think he is. Maitzen's concern to allow voluntariness to play this sort of role and thus deploy a more permissive version of Theodical Individualism seems wise in the light of examples such as the following.

Consider the case of a soldier in command of a platoon of men advancing through unsecured territory. The risks faced by the platoon as a whole would be minimised by his having one of his men walking quite a way out in front of the rest. By drawing any enemy fire that's to be had, treading on any landmines that might be on the path, and so

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[2] Stephen Maitzen, 'Ordinary Morality Implies Atheism,' *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 1. 2, (2009), p. 108.

[3] *Maitzen, op. cit.,* p. 109.

[4] Indeed email correspondence with Maitzen on the first draft of this paper confirms this presumption.

forth, this 'lead' soldier could reveal the whereabouts of risks prior to the rest of the platoon coming upon them. However, the role of lead soldier is one which, obviously, brings greater risks to the soldier occupying it than would fall on any individual soldier if the commander adopted the only alternative policy, having his men advance as a group. He explains all this to his men and one of them volunteers for the role. Being in full awareness of these facts, this man would, were the commander to take him up on his offer, be understandably more fearful as he advanced than he would be had the commander refused to accept his offer and they all advanced together. Even if in the end there were to turn out to be no enemy, landmines, and so forth and thus all the platoon arrived at their destination safely, that fear would be in itself an evil that the man in the lead position would have suffered and we may stipulate that it wouldn't bring him any greater good that in any way compensated him for it and that he couldn't have achieved in any other way. (For example, we may stipulate that his fellow soldiers would not applaud him for his heroism, but rather ridicule him for it.) Still, it seems, the soldier is noble in offering and the commander should accept his offer.

Let us suppose that the commander does accept this soldier's offer and the platoon starts on its journey and let us further suppose that in fact there are enemy lying in wait ready to spring an ambush. They act precipitously and shoot the lead soldier, thereby revealing their location; the rest of the platoon is thereby enabled to escape the ambush uninjured and reach their destination safely. The lead soldier's wound is painful, but he ultimately recovers from it. This soldier's suffering this wound then, we may suggest, would be an evil of quite a high order, one that would be gratuitous *vis a vis* him *qua* individual, though it would have brought a high order of net good – saving the lives of many fellow soldiers – to the group of which he was a part. Nevertheless, even had the commander known infallibly in advance of needing to decide whether or not to accept this soldier's offer that this is what would befall him, surely he would not have been obliged to refuse the offer. Indeed, we might go further and say that surely this knowledge would have made it all the more true that he should have done as he did: accept it. In general, whenever the net benefit that befalls the platoon outweighs the suffering of the individual who volunteers for the lead soldier position and could not have been achieved in any other way, the volunteer is courageous – not foolhardy

– in volunteering and the commander, to the extent that we presume him to know of such things, is obliged to avail himself, and the rest of his platoon, of this man's bravery. In the light of examples such as this, Maitzen seems right to qualify Theodical Individualism as he does.

If we bring these thoughts together, we may therefore give Theodical Individualism a form which, whilst not being exactly that in which it has been supported by any of the authors of whom we've made mention, is more plausible than any we find in their writings. I therefore define Theodical Individualism as the following thesis.

> Necessarily, God will not permit suffering that is
> (a) undeserved;
> (b) involuntary; and
> (c) gratuitous *vis a vis* the individual suffering it, in the sense that it either does not produce a net benefit for that individual or, if it does produce a net benefit for him or her, is unnecessary in producing that net benefit.[5]

There are a number of grounds on which one might have doubts about Theodical Individualism even in this form and on which one might have doubts about other versions of it, such as Jordan's, Stump's and Maitzen's versions.[6] Jordan and Maitzen give one of these grounds: combining it

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[5] Careful readers will note that I have dropped 'human' from this formulation too; I presume that any Martians who, whilst not human are significantly similar to us in sentience, freedom, moral worth, and so on would, by Theodical Individualism, be exempt from suffering of this sort too. The same may not be true for non-human animals such as dogs. Nothing in this paper turns on these issues, so I leave them out of sight in the main text.

Gellman points out in discussion that it might be that an evil was gratuitous in my sense, yet still very easily justifiable, through being a necessary condition of a great enough good, whilst not producing it. He uses the following example. 'There could be cases (but not all!) where, for example, God allows a person to be sad so that another can make them very happy and cheer them up, stipulating that the cheer is so great that the person thinks it was very worthwhile to have been sad just to be so much cheered up! But of course the sadness does not produce the cheer but is only a necessary condition of it.'

[6] Some of the more general considerations which one might raise about whether God might, after all, permit some gratuitous evils could be employed here. See e.g. William Hasker, 'The Necessity of Gratuitous Evil,' *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (1992), p. 44; and Michael Peterson, *Evil and the Christian God* (Grand Rapids, 1982), chs. 4 and 5.

(and things like it) with Theism undermines 'commonsense morality.' Maitzen thinks Theodical Individualism obviously true and thus uses this incompatibility with commonsense morality as an argument for Atheism. But someone who finds Theism more plausible than Theodical Individualism would – presuming that they judge the existence of the sorts of evils in question; their incompatibility with Theodical Individualism; and the substance of commonsense morality as truths no less obvious than Maitzen judges them – simply run Maitzen's argument in reverse, taking him to have given them good reason to reject Theodical Individualism.[7] (Hasker uses a similar incompatibility as an argument for God's allowing gratuitous evils in general.)[8] That's the direction in which I myself would incline to run Maitzen's argument.[9] But, pushing

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[7] Jerome Gellman has recently replied to Maitzen's paper ('On God, Suffering, and Theodical Individualism,' *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 1 (2010), pp. 187-191), accepting Maitzen's Theodical Individualism for the sake of argument, and challenging instead whether Maitzen's conclusion that 'we never have a moral obligation to prevent undeserved, involuntary human suffering' (187) follows from it. He advances some powerful arguments to the effect that it does not (though see Maitzen's reply in the same issue). Everything said in the current paper is, I think, compatible with Gellman's argument; in other words, it may well be as Gellman suggests, *viz.* that even if one *did* grant Theodical Individualism (which this paper suggests one should not do), one need not think that ordinary morality is threatened in the manner Maitzen and others would maintain (and in which I may seem to be supposing it is threatened in the main text). If that is so, then one doesn't have the 'running in reverse' reason to reject Theodical Individualism that I suggest in the main text, though of course that's hardly a comfort for Maitzen.

[8] Hasker, *op. cit.*

[9] I recall that I had a similar response when first reading Rowe's presentation of his evidential argument from evil. As is well known, Rowe gives a theological premise, that God wouldn't allow gratuitous evils, and a factual one, that there are gratuitous evils, and suggests that the second is the most controversial. He then spends his time in his paper defending the second premise, enthusing about a Moorean 'commonsense' approach, one which has as an element the propensity to run arguments in whichever direction preserves commonsense best, before concluding that (probably) God does not exist. When I first read his paper, it was the first – theological – premise that immediately struck me as the least obviously true, and I can remember being very surprised that he dealt with it in a few sentences. The theological premise is highly abstract, concerning how a perfectly morally good being – one significantly different from any of us in power and knowledge – would behave. It seemed far from obviously true to me, far less obviously true to me than at that stage Theism seemed to me. Thus, in precisely the spirit of Moore that Rowe encouraged, I read his argument as giving me reason to reject that premise.

those sorts of considerations to one side, one could have doubts about Theodical Individualism based on grounds quite distant from any commitment to Theism, and it is some of those which I'll explore in this paper: in short, my argument will be that no principle similar to Theodical Individualism applies to us, so there is reason to think that Theodical Individualism does not apply to God.

II.

Let us go back to the example of the commanding officer seeking to get his men through potentially hostile territory with the minimum of loss and let us alter the situation slightly by supposing that, after he has explained the situation to his platoon, *nobody* volunteers to be the lead soldier. That seems quite reasonable, after all; it seems to be – and can be made obviously so by suitable accretion of detail – above and beyond the call of duty for any individual to put themselves forward for this dangerous role and it seems obviously contrary to each individual's own best interests (*ante-mortem* at least) for them to put themselves forward. If that is so, perhaps it is even in violation of a duty to themselves, if such things exist, or at least in violation of the demands of prudence, for anyone to volunteer, in which case a peculiar sort of 'impasse' threatens: each individually is only rational if they fail to volunteer, but nobody volunteering would lead to the group as a whole suffering more than any individual would suffer if he did volunteer. It seems obvious what the commanding officer should do: choose one soldier and order him to take the role. Of course there will be moral constraints operating on how the commanding officer chooses this soldier. These constraints will forbid him, for example, from choosing Private Uriah Hittite just because he happens to fancy Mrs Hittite and considers his chances with her would be improved were her husband to take this role. But there are morally innocent ways of making this selection: I take it that, failing anything else, one of these would be to get his men to draw lots. Let us suppose then that the commanding officer chooses one of his soldiers by this or some other morally innocent method and orders him forward. He will then be subjecting that soldier to an evil, at least the evil of the heightened fear of death or serious injury that inevitably accompanies being out in front.

And indeed, whilst leaving verisimilitude in our suppositions as to the cognitive capacities of the commanding officer behind somewhat at this point, we can stipulate that the commanding officer will be subjecting this soldier to an evil of an infallibly-foreknown severe injury that will bring this individual soldier no net benefit. If we do so stipulate, it becomes all the more starkly obvious that this evil is one that is (a) undeserved, (b) involuntary, and (c) fails to bring a net benefit to the soldier concerned. Yet, as we make these stipulations it becomes no less obvious that the commanding officer should order a man forward. Sometimes indeed – most of us will think – it is a commanding officer's duty to send one or more of his soldiers to what he is sure will be painful death, in other words to subject them to the most extreme form of undeserved, involuntary, and gratuitous (for them) evil of which we know.[10] And if all of this is so, then there are situations in which human agents are not under a moral constraint such as that which Theodical Individualism suggests God is under, which in turn suggests that we need positive reason to suppose that God *is* constrained in this way. The 'default,' as it were, would be to assume that he is not.

Maitzen does not consider counterexamples drawn from the realm of created agents to principles akin to Theodical Individualism as undermining Theodical Individualism[11] for he thinks that created agents are only excused from conforming to principles akin to Theodical Individualism in cases in which they are excused due to limitations of the sort that God would not suffer from. In the case we are imagining, for example, it seems very plausible that it is indeed a metaphysically contingent limitation on the commanding officer that excuses him from conforming to a principle akin to Theodical Individualism. Were the commanding officer to be able simply to click his fingers and thereby magically transport his platoon safely to their destination, obviously he

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[10] I have just returned from a short holiday in France and, whilst passing through Normandy, read on an information board beside the burnt-out Sherman tank in Ecouche the words of an Allied commanding officer to some of his men just before they went into battle: 'Between you and this nation lies a huge chasm. It is up to you to fill that chasm with your corpses.' History does not record whether they found this speech inspiring.

[11] I say 'akin to' as Theodical Individualism, by definition, applies only to God. If we are either to support or undermine it, we need to draw from examples of principles that are only 'akin to' it, in applying to created moral agents.

should do that and not subject any soldier – volunteer or otherwise – to the risks attendant upon being lead soldier. Maitzen himself considers the example of quarantine and puts the point like this: 'These practices reflect our imperfection: it's only limitations in our knowledge and power (in this case, medical) that make us resort to triage or quarantine. We regret having to do it; we wish we had the resources to make these practices unnecessary. A perfect God, however, isn't subject to our limitations in knowledge or power, or indeed to any real limitations in knowledge or power. So no perfect God has an excuse for exploitation ['exploitation' is Maitzen's term for violating a principle such as Theodical Individualism].'[12] It seems then that Maitzen is willing to accept the general point that being unable to bring about some net good for a wider group without violating something akin to a Theodical Individualist constraint liberates one from such a constraint, sometimes at least. But if that general point is granted, then we cannot conclude that Theodical Individualism is true – that God is under such a constraint – until we know that there are no logical or metaphysical necessities which prevent him being able to bring about some net good for a wider group without violating Theodical Individualism. Sure, the constraint cannot be a metaphysically or logically contingent one, as it is in the case of the commanding officer, but that is no comfort for the defender of Theodical Individualism. For it is very plausible to suggest that there *are* metaphysical necessities of the sort that would liberate God. I have argued elsewhere (and I am hardly unique in doing so) that it is metaphysically impossible to create any set of libertarian significantly free creatures whose membership is greater than one whilst necessitating that they do not choose to subject one another to evils that are genuinely gratuitous.[13] (There is an easy way of getting this result: define significant freedom in such a way that it requires of those who are significantly free that they can subject others

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[12] Stephen Maitzen, 'Does God destroy our duty of Compassion?,' *Free Inquiry,* October/November (2010), p. 52.

[13] T. J. Mawson, *Belief in God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 198ff. This isn't, note, the 'hoary suggestion' Maitzen speaks of in his reply to Gellman ('On Gellman's Attempted Rescue,' *EJPR* 1 (2010), 1, 198), that God never interferes with our libertarian free will; that, obviously, would be too extreme a view. The view that is much more plausible and suffices here is that God sometimes rightly chooses to preserve the good of libertarian free will even when that free will is being used for bad ends.

to such evils; any lesser degree of freedom just wouldn't be significant.) If moves of this sort are viable, then one has got reason to suppose that God *is* liberated from needing to conform to Theodical Individualism.[14] This is a point to which we shall have occasion to return later.

So far my argument has rested heavily on an example, which – in not being of someone facing a logical or metaphysical impossibility – is not a perfect analogue for the situation in which God plausibly finds himself. It may also be objected to it that there are other issues in the background to my primary example which mislead us. For example, we have not yet specified that the soldiers were not volunteers for the army, even if not volunteers for the particular role of lead soldier. If they had volunteered for the army, then plausibly they would have done so knowing that a situation in which they'd then be commanded to take on extra personal suffering for the good of their comrades would be relatively likely to befall them. (That's the nature of army life, indeed corporate life in general.) We may suggest then that there is a sort of 'second-order' voluntariness in play in the example, one which allows the commanding officer to order one of them to take on the role of lead soldier. But we can stipulate otherwise – they are all conscripts – and we find our moral intuitions unaffected by such stipulations. Matters are similar for other features that might be supposed to be disanalogous and morally relevant; we can stipulate them away in our imagination and our intuitions that the commanding officer should violate a principle akin to that of Theodical Individualism remain strong. We have already been doing this by positing that the commanding officer has infallible knowledge of what will happen to the lead soldier – a serious injury – rather than just knowledge of probabilities. Such stipulating away seems to make no difference to our moral intuitions. It is true that the soldier's constraints will remain contingent ones, but it is that they are constraints not that they are contingent constraints that liberates him from needing

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[14] It may be that one's starting point with God – as the most perfect being possible – should always be that there is not a limitation of a particular sort, but, even so, precisely as he is the most perfect being *possible*, impossibilities of a logical or metaphysical sort can impose limitations even on him. Such is the case I am suggesting here – or rather, as to articulate the reasons would require a whole new paper, such is something which we cannot assume is not the case, and we'd need to assume that it was not for Theodical Individualism to apply.

to accord with any principle akin to Theodical Individualism. But I admit there are 'ineliminable' weaknesses to the analogy. As I have conceded, the relevant constraints are, after all, not ones of logical or metaphysical impossibility (they do just stem from his being unable to magic his platoon to their final destination – even the fact that he cannot make a soldier freely volunteer, which is a metaphysical constraint, is only cogent given that he's in the situation where he needs a volunteer). Other wrinkles could be ironed out by further epicycles of this example, but, rather than do that, I shall turn to an analogy even better for our purposes in thinking about the case of God, better in that it is a case where volunteering is more deeply impossible.

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III.

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Let us consider two potential parents deciding whether or not to have a child. It seems easy to specify things – e.g. that having a child would not be financially ruinous for this particular couple or prevent them from fulfilling their other obligations – so as to generate in our imaginations a situation in which the couple in question are neither obliged to have a child, nor obliged not to do so. We probably think that in fact most couples weighing whether or not to have children are not morally obliged in either direction. What is more, we can construct the situation so that we balance off all other goods in ways such that it will be neither overall good nor overall bad by *any* evaluative criterion for them either to have a child or to refrain from doing so. For example, we may stipulate that their circumstances are such that if they do not have a child, they will have more free time and money to pursue their other pastimes, pastimes which we may stipulate will then bring them exactly the same pleasure as having a child would have brought them. And so forth. Of course we may be worried, especially those of us who have had children, that this second sort of balancing off will be psychologically implausible for the vast majority of humanity, but the important point for our discussion is that it is *that* sort of worry that stops us from thinking that cases where there are no reasons on balance either to have or to fail to have a child are widespread. It is not the sort of worry I am about to outline, one that would be based on our endorsing a principle akin to Theodical Individualism.

Every child born into this world is one whom the parents can be almost certain will suffer evils that are undeserved, involuntary, and gratuitous at the very least *vis a vis* the individual. (A prime example of such a widespread evil would be bullying, which almost every child suffers from at some stage in his or her life.) It is very plausible to suppose when contemplating whether or not to have children that any child born will be such as to suffer evils of this sort – ones that are undeserved, involuntary and gratuitous *vis a vis* the child. But, even so, we do not think that we are thereby more or less universally placed under an obligation *not* to have children. We then are not under a constraint akin to the Theodical Individualist one when it comes to our acts of procreation. Why think that God would be under such a constraint when it came to his act of creation? I can't think of any reason.

The problem with defending any variant of Theodical Individualism seems to me to lie in the fact that in some cases it just is obviously permissible (parents), indeed in some cases it is obviously obligatory (commanding officers), for people to subject other people to undeserved and involuntary suffering which is gratuitous *vis a vis* the individual. Clear cases are those where that suffering is known to be non-gratuitous *vis a vis* some larger group and relatively small in comparison to the benefits that befall that larger group as a result and that could not have been achieved in any other way. The 'could not have been be achieved in any other way' is – for created agents – often in part a result of limitations that they suffer from and which God would not suffer from, e.g. being unable to magic soldiers over potentially hostile territory by clicking one's fingers. But if the 'could not' was generated by a logical or metaphysical impossibility, e.g. being unable to force a particular soldier to volunteer, for volunteering needs to be done freely in a libertarian sense, that does not seem to alter its cogency: it is still a 'could not' that may liberate one from needing to accord with a principle akin to Theodical lndividualism. In cases where the suffering is known to be non-gratuitous *vis a vis* some larger group, such sufferers will then perhaps[15] be being used by whomever subjects them to the suffering as means to an end, but, even if so, they need not be used *merely* as means to an end, i.e. used as means

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[15] I say 'perhaps' as it may be that the relevant suffering is foreseen but unintended in the mind of the person subjecting them to it, which perhaps stops them using the other even as a means.

in a way which is morally problematic. (We all think it is permissible to use people as means. E.g. when phoning one's credit card company, one uses whomever – eventually – picks up the phone as a means to the end of rectifying their latest error. What is not permissible is using someone *merely* as a means, e.g. venting one's anger on that hapless employee for the failings of some unidentifiable co-worker by swearing at him or her.) One way in which one can avoid using people merely as means, i.e. as means in a way that is morally impermissible, is by those people volunteering for the role of means in advance of being put in it (thus, the cases on which Maitzen focuses). But that – it seems to me – is only one way. Consider the following situation.

A couple's first child suffers from a disease which is such that he needs a bone marrow donation if he is to survive into adulthood; otherwise, he will die a premature and painful death. The only sort of person who could be, even in principle, a suitable donor would be another child born to the same parents, though any other child conceived by them would be suitable for being a donor. The process of donating bone marrow is a painful one for the donor and would have to be undergone by the donor child within a few months of his or her birth for the marrow to be suitable for transfer into the first child. The parents had been considering having another child anyway and had found all other considerations, pro and con, balanced against one another. They now know that if they have a second child, he or she could be valuable as a means to the end of healing their first child. Is it morally permissible for them to add this reason into the balance in their thinking? Is it even obligatory for them to do so?[16]

In my experience, intuitions differ on these questions. Personally, I think that the situation can be filled out in such a way that it becomes very plausibly obligatory on the parents to try to conceive another child.

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[16] If you think that any consideration of how the second child could be a means to some good end for the first child is morally impermissible, then you should in consistency think that parents who know that if they have children past the first, these subsequent children will provide playmates for the first act impermissibly when they bear *that* in mind in deciding whether or not to have subsequent children. But that seems absurd. In most non-Western cultures, the idea that it was morally impermissible to consider, when deciding how many children to have, how one's children might help one in one's old age would strike people as equally absurd.

But what is less controversial and sufficient for our present purposes is that it be at the least permissible for them to have a second child in part so as to be able to use this second child as a means to the end of saving the life of their first. Let us add in some further details to suggest this then.

The parents know that they will love this second child for his or her own self, not *merely* as a means to the end of saving their first child. They know that, acting from their love (and being fortunately circumstanced in other ways), they can and will give this second child a life that is much better than simply overall good; they will give the second child a superfluity of goods in the widest sense of 'goods.' These goods will be such that they more than provide adequate compensation for the pain that the child would undergo during the operation, which is to say that they'll be such that were the child to have been presented with the choice of no operation but none of these goods or this amount of suffering plus these goods in advance of being subjected to the operation (as was of course impossible), he or she would have been acting against his or her own self-interest if he or she had not chosen to undergo the operation. Of course they intend to subject this second child to a painful operation at a stage in the child's life where it cannot understand what is happening to it; the suffering they intend knowingly to bring on the child[17] will be undeserved, involuntary, and bring the child suffering it no benefit at all (the goods they later give it – those which are in fact more than adequate compensation – they do not give just because they are compensation; they give them unconditionally, because they love this second child and are able to give him or her these goods; so the second child would have got these goods anyway). But the parents intend, when the second child is old enough to understand, to explain why it is they allowed him or her to be subjected to this suffering. And we may posit that the parents know that this point of time will more or less coincide with one from which the child, looking back, can see that he or she has a life which is overall more than merely good; by that time enough of those compensating goods will have been given to him or her (though, as just mentioned, not given to him or her just because they compensate

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[17] Again it is a 'nice question' whether they intend the suffering or merely foresee it as an inescapable feature of what they do intend and whether this makes a difference.

for his or her earlier suffering), for him or her retrospectively to endorse his or her parents' decision to use him or her so as to benefit the brother who by then he or she will love every bit as much as the parents do. It seems to me that it is at the least permissible for parents of whom all of this is true to have the second child in part for the reason that he or she will be able to benefit the first; this is so even though the benefit which the second child provides to the first is not necessary for that second child to achieve some net benefit – the goods which, as it is, if the parents do subject the second child to the operation, may be spoken of as more than adequate compensation, would have come to him or her had the parents conceived him or her but then decided not to subject him or her to the operation necessary to save his or her sibling's life (though they would not then have come to him or her as compensation). Thus, parents who knew they were in such a situation would not be required to avoid subjecting an individual, the second child, to suffering that is (a) undeserved by the individual undergoing it, (b) involuntary for that individual (at least at the time he or she undergoes it), and (c) gratuitous *vis a vis* that individual. Thus, *a fortiori* given that God would know with all the more certainty in virtue of his omniscience that he was in a similar situation were he ever to be so, we cannot conclude that God is required to avoid subjecting an individual to suffering that is (a) undeserved by the individual undergoing it, (b) involuntary for that individual (at least *ante-mortem*), and (c) gratuitous *vis a vis* that individual. There may well be some goods which can of metaphysical necessity only be achieved by subjecting individuals to suffering of this sort and which are good enough to justify God in doing so.[18]

Maitzen considers by contrast the following case: 'Imagine that I clone a child into existence . . . and imagine that I treat the child splendidly for all but the final minute of his or her life. But during that final minute, I allow someone to abuse the child to death in order to show onlookers just how revolting child abuse is and thereby deter them from ever abusing a child . . . . I behave imperfectly, to say the least'[19] Here, Maitzen is surely right; it would be impermissible for one to use one's clone in this fashion.

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[18] As already mentioned, I discuss this further in my *Belief in God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 198ff.

[19] Maitzen, 'Does God destroy our duty of Compassion?,' p. 53.

However, I would suggest that something along the lines of Maitzen's cloning case might be morally permissible. It seems to me that for such exploitation, to use Maitzen's term, to be morally permissible, it would need to involve oneself (as exploiter) having knowledge of the fact that the exploited will volunteer (even if only retrospectively [which point may only be reached *post-mortem* in the case of God, of course] and only after compensation has been paid to him or her [which point again might be only *post-mortem* for God]) to be exploited in this way. In addition, it seems to me that it would need to involve oneself having the ability and intention to provide that compensation (and knowledge of the fact that one will provide it [again, this might be *post-mortem* for God]). Maitzen's case doesn't meet these conditions. But cases along the lines of Maitzen's where created agents meet these conditions can be constructed, even if, in constructing such cases, one has to stipulate – somewhat implausibly – that the participants have been given knowledge of a higher degree of certainty than we usually have. And I don't have the same response to them as to Maitzen's. Suppose, for example, you generate a clone in the manner Maitzen suggests. It now transpires that you could allow this clone, whilst a child, to be used in the horrible way Maitzen mentions; he would be tortured severely (albeit not to death) so as to make the point about how bad it is to torture children more vividly than it would be possible to make that point in any other way. Suppose further that you know that net good of a high order can only come from your making this point this vividly. But you also know that this high-order good *will* come from your making this point this vividly. We may posit, for example, that you know that if and only if you do so exploit your child, will it be that three other children will not be tortured to death (and tortured in an equally painful way). This then is to posit that you know that the torture will be non-gratuitous from this wider perspective. Finally, you know that you'll thereafter – when your child grows up into adulthood – be able to explain to him why you had to use him in this way if you were to bring about this high order of net good; and you know you'll by then have given him what he regards as compensation (i.e. goods which he'll rightly judge outweigh in goodness the badness of what he suffered), so that his life is overall a good to him (though the torture segment of it wasn't of course; it was genuinely gratuitous *vis a vis* himself). It seems to me that in such a circumstance it would be morally permissible for you

to exploit your clone in Maitzen's sense.[20] In fact, my intuitions suggest that it would be obligatory, but I shall not push that stronger claim for it is unnecessary in this context.

In correspondence Maitzen suggests that we ask ourselves when considering such cases the following question; "In ideal circumstances, would we use the means that these agents are using?" [and suggests that] the answer is "No, but these agents aren't in ideal circumstances.'" He says that he would 'need to be convinced that God also faces unavoidably non-ideal circumstances, and for reasons I give in the original article I don't think that the libertarian freedom theodicy is convincing on that score.' However, were the 'non-ideal' circumstances that God was in circumstances of logical/metaphysical necessity, then there would be no more ideal circumstance even possible. Thus again we may return to the point that we cannot conclude that Theodical Individualism is true – that God's under such a constraint – until we know that there are no logical or metaphysical necessities which prevent him being able to bring about some net good for a wider group without violating Theodical Individualism, a modality of a different order – not just some physical impossibility, for example, but a metaphysical one – but one that nevertheless places him in a situation akin to his only being able to stop three children being tortured to death by allowing one to be tortured severely. And it is very plausible that there *are* metaphysical necessities of this sort. For, as already mentioned, it is very plausible to suggest that it is metaphysically impossible to create any set of libertarian significantly free creatures whose membership is greater than one whilst necessitating that they do not choose to subject one another to evils that are genuinely gratuitous and that libertarian significant freedom is a significant good.

In this connection it is helpful to look at Alston's position as discussed in a footnote to Maitzen's original article and described by Maitzen there as 'a bit complicated.'[21] Maitzen suggests that Alston's view involves 'a combination of willingly borne undeserved suffering and adequately

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[20] Interestingly, Gellman reports that his intuitions are precisely the reverse. One might say that one thing is for sure then: supposing various charitable things about the virtues of Gellman, Maitzen, Swinburne, and myself, intuitions in this area are not reliable. Even if that were so, it would obviously be of no help to Maitzen-type arguments, as they rely on our intuitions being reliable.

[21] Maitzen, 'Ordinary Morality Implies Atheism,' p. 109.

compensated undeserved suffering. Because the suffering willingly bears her suffering (at least retrospectively), I don't believe that Alson's position conflicts with TI [Theodical Individualism] as formulated here.' So, it seems that Maitzen would count any suffering which in some *post-mortem* state is 'retrospectively willingly borne' as being voluntarily assented to and thus not a sort of suffering which God is, via Theodical Individualism, compelled to avoid anyone suffering.

Maitzen's seems like an odd use of the notion of voluntariness to me. In the case of a second child being conceived so as to be able to save a first, the fact that the second child will at some later stage 'retrospectively willingly bear' the suffering that accompanies the operation by which he or she saved his or her sibling's life does not make the suffering that the second child undergoes at the time of that operation any more voluntary. I would incline then to say that suffering that is not voluntarily assented to at the time it is suffered is not voluntary. Some of it may yet not be strictly involuntary (if we take involuntary to be contrary to the will), for it may be simply non-voluntary in that it is so minor that the person suffering it doesn't form a will to avoid it. But some of it will be genuinely involuntary at the time in that it will be contrary to a formed will at that time; it stays an instance of genuinely involuntary suffering even if in retrospect one 'willingly' bears it. However, I would maintain, *contra* Maitzen I take it, that at least the sort of involuntary suffering that is later voluntarily consented to rationally is morally justifiable. And I'd have read Alston as suggesting something along these lines too. If we do stick with Maitzen's extended notion of 'voluntary,' such that something is voluntary just if it is at some stage (any stage, however fleetingly? / in a 'final analysis'/ at an all-things-considered stage?) voluntarily consented to, then it becomes obvious that we are never (prior to the Eschaton that is) in a position to judge that the world does contain instances of suffering that are involuntary. For any instance of suffering to be involuntary, on Theism it'd have to be the case that at the end of time it wasn't 'retrospectively willingly borne' by its resurrected bearer and who would wish to suggest we can see this fact with any clarity? Indeed, a Universalist about salvation might contend that on Theism we know in advance that there will be no cases of involuntary suffering in this sense.[22] And this would be a result

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[22] As I put it elsewhere, 'On Theism, as we have seen [I have previously argued

very undesirable from Maitzen's point of view as he requires it to be the case that instances of suffering of the sort Theodical Individualism rules out do indeed knowably occur. Maitzen's argument then is at that stage best served by the sense of voluntariness that I prefer, where it is sufficient for something to be involuntary that it is unwillingly borne – in the sense of contrary to the will – at the time it is borne (and which hence enables us definitely to know that some instances of suffering are involuntary prior to the Eschaton). However, what this gives Maitzen's argument with one hand it takes away with the other, in that it is then – I would contend – not at all obvious that underserved involuntary suffering of the sort that brings the sufferer no net benefit is always impermissible, as Theodical Individualism suggests. Indeed, cases of commanding officers choosing one of their soldiers for roles that result in their severe injury or death; parents having children; parents having children in part so as to use those children as means to other worthy ends; and so on, suggest to me that we are sometimes obligated to subject individuals to suffering that is undeserved, involuntary and brings the individual concerned no net benefit (indeed sometimes no benefit at all, other perhaps than the dubious 'benefit of being of benefit to someone else').

In order to drive the moral home, I want to labour a little bit more a variation of the thought experiment concerning parents deciding whether or not to have a second child in part to save the life of their first. Let us suppose then that the parents conceive a second child in part with the intention of using this second child so as to be able to save their first. And they give birth to a healthy girl, someone who would be a suitable donor. However, when the time comes, the parents choose not to go through with subjecting the girl, the second child, to the operation. Perhaps they are impressed by the fact that they cannot get her voluntary assent to the procedure in advance of subjecting her to it and think that this disbars them from subjecting her to it. So it is that the two

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Theism entails Universalism], after our finite lives here an infinite life awaits us hereafter. For every creature who suffers, there will come a day when they say that as individuals their suffering has been more than adequately compensated for and on which they will be able to see how their suffering fitted into a greater whole that was overall worth it. On that day, even those who were broken on the wheels of the machine as they turned will thank God for it.' That, I take it, is their 'retrospectively willingly bearing it'. T. J. Mawson, *Belief in God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 215.

siblings grow up together, the first in increasingly bad health, the second receiving all the goods that would have come to her had she undergone the operation and then would have been in part truly described as compensating goods. The second child is thus the net benefiter – she didn't in the end have to undergo the suffering of the operation and she has a life which is in all other respects as good as she'd have had if she'd had the operation. The first child is obviously the net loser and a net loser by a larger amount than the second child benefits – he dies an early and painful death. As the boy heads towards his premature and painful death, the parents explain to the girl how it is that she would have been able to save her brother had she been operated on at an earlier stage and they explain how it is that they chose not to subject her to such an operation and how it is that it is now too late for any such operation to be effective; they must just all watch this first child die.

In such a case, it seems to me that the second child could truly say to the parents that they had failed in their duty to the first child. But, what is more, it also seems to me that the second child could maintain that the parents had failed in their duty *to her*. The parents *ought* to have subjected the second child to the operation for the first child's sake in part because the second child had a right to be of use to her brother, which right the parents have not dutifully honoured and, in not dutifully honouring it, they have wronged *the second child.* At the time the decision had to be made, the second child was too young to know about it, so only the parents could have made it the case that she would save her sibling's life; the parents denied the second child the honour of saving her sibling's life and thus as well as wronging the first child the parents have wronged the second child. This is perhaps slightly puzzling. How can the parents have wronged the second child by failing to impose upon her an evil that in itself would bring her no benefit? One way of resolving this puzzlement would be to acknowledge that the very fact of being of value to someone else (at least significant value to someone one loves) is itself a benefit to the person who is of value. Swinburne speaks in this vein more generally of the benefit of 'being of use' and it may be that one characterizes this situation best by saying that in this case a benefit of being of use would have been so great for the second child as to make the second child actually – contrary to our supposition in setting the situation out – a net benefiter from her undergoing the

operation. Be that as it may, we can see, I suggest, that sometimes one actually honours an individual more by doing that which brings them no benefit (other than the 'benefit of being a benefit to somebody else,' if we may speak of such) and certainly no *net* benefit, and that sometimes people would have more to complain of on their own behalves were one not to so honour them, even in situations where they would be the net benefiters of one's not so honouring them.

<div align="center">IV.</div>

In conclusion, examples of situations which, even if not everyday, are ones the elements of which are hardly beyond the bounds of our experience suggest that agents may, without deviating from morality's demands, permit or indeed knowingly cause suffering that is (a) undeserved by the individual undergoing it, (b) involuntary for that individual (at the time it is being suffered), and (c) gratuitous *vis a vis* that individual. The examples concern created agents, agents then who – by the nature of the case – will be under limitations that God is not under and it is often plausible that they are justified in behaving as they do only because they are under these limitations. However, God's omnipotence is not usually thought of as allowing him to do the logically or metaphysically impossible, so 'limitations' (the word now needs scare quotation marks as these are not really limitations at all) arising from these areas would similarly mean that he was not morally constrained in the way Theodical Individualism suggests. That is to say that, contrary to Theodical Individualism, God may well permit suffering that is (a) undeserved by the individual undergoing it, (b) involuntary for that individual (at least *ante-mortem),* and (c) gratuitous *vis a vis* that individual. A clear case of permissible suffering that meets these conditions would be one where the suffering, whilst undeserved by the individual undergoing it, would nevertheless be one that it would be rational for the individual to acquiesce to (even if only *post-mortem,* after adequate compensation had been provided to him or her and the place of this suffering in a wider scheme of things that was overall good and in which it was not gratuitous had been made clear). From that *post-mortem* vantage point, the sufferer might regard his or her being subjected to this suffering as an honour in the way

that it is an honour to be chosen to lead one's platoon through enemy territory or to undergo a painful operation that saves one's brother's life, even if such honours might not be capable of being regarded as such *ante-mortem.* Even if the sufferer did not regard the suffering as being a 'benefit' (the benefit of being of benefit to someone else) which outweighed the suffering and thus did regard it as something that he or she would have net-benefitted from God's having prevented, the sufferer may, in consistency with this judgement, regard it as something which God would have wronged him or her in preventing, for honour is more important than maximal benefit in such cases.

We all recognise the childish error of the 'Whoever dies with the most toys wins' approach to life. What I am suggesting is that it may be as erroneous to suggest that 'Whoever has maximal goods over his or her total (*ante-* and *post-mortem*) life has done best.' (Were that to be so, then perhaps a person who received less goods than he or she could have got would have a cause for complaint against any person who could have arranged for him or her to get more.) But if what makes a life go well for the person living it is in part that they be of use to others, a life in which they are so of use – even if by being of use they are not the net benefiter – could be a better life for them than the alternative and they'd then have more reason for complaint if someone denied them the opportunity to be so of use so as to maximise their goods. Sometimes at least, having the honour of being of use makes one's life better for oneself than it would have been had one got the greater goods that one would otherwise have received at the expense of being of use. Thus Theodical Individualism is false and any arguments which utilize it are unsound.[23]

QUESTIONING GÖDEL'S ONTOLOGICAL PROOF: IS TRUTH POSITIVE?

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Abstract. In his "Ontological proof", Kurt Gödel introduces the notion of a second-order value property, the positive property *P*. The second axiom of the proof states that for any property φ: If φ is positive, its negation is not positive, and vice versa. I put forward that this concept of positiveness leads into a paradox when we apply it to the following self-reflexive sentences: (A) The truth value of A is not positive; (B) The truth value of B is positive. Given axiom 2, sentences A and B paradoxically cannot be both true or both false, and it is also impossible that one of the sentences is true whereas the other is false.

If Oscar Wilde is right and the way of paradoxes is the way to truth, then the way of the paradoxes of truth would (paradoxically) also be the way to truth. Paradoxes of truth, like the liar and the strengthened liar, have always been the source of substantial reflections on the concept of truth. Every new discovery in the field of the paradoxes of truth can, therefore, increase our understanding of truth. For this reason, I would like to present a new problem, perhaps even a new paradox of truth, which arises out of the question whether *truth is positive*. We shall see that Kurt Gödel's positiveness property (in particular axiom 2 of the Gödelian proof of the existence of God) together with two self-referential sentences containing statements about the positiveness of truth values leads to a paradox of positive truth.

I. GÖDEL-POSITIVENESS

A formal system of positiveness, which is to be our starting point here, has been sketched out by Kurt Gödel in his "Ontological proof" of the

existence of God (Gödel 1995, 403-4). This modal logical argument dated from February 10, 1970 was familiar to logicians and philosophers since the seventies of the previous century, but was not published until 1987 (Sobel 1987, 256-7). At the centre of the proof is the assumption of the so-called positive property.

The basic concept of positiveness P that Gödel uses in his proof is explained in the following way: Positiveness P is a second-order property, which is applied to first-order properties φ. In the first line of the ontological proof, positiveness is therefore introduced as the property $P(\varphi)$: "φ is positive (or $\varphi \in P$)" (Gödel 1995, 403). Secondly, 'P' is a value predicate, positiveness P is a value property: "Positive means positive in the moral aesthetic sense (independently of the accidental structure of the world)" (Gödel 1995, 404). There is a notebook entry by Gödel that provides us with more information about what we are to understand by "the moral aesthetic sense" of a positive property: "It is possible to interpret the positive as perfective; that is, "purely good," that is, such as implies no negation of "purely good."" (Gödel 1995, 435 = notebook "Phil XIV", p. 105)[1]. And so, thirdly, positiveness is not a value property that only receives its value in relation to something else; in fact, it possesses its value absolutely. In demanding that positiveness is to be understood as "pure good" Gödel explicitly distances himself from the assumption that positive is in the first place that which is good in some respect: "The interpretation of "positive property" as "good" (that is, as one with positive value) is impossible, because the greatest advantage + the smallest disadvantage is negative" (Gödel 1995, 435 = notebook "Phil XIV", p. 105)[2]. Fourthly, Gödel's positiveness is orientated towards the concept of perfections – whereby perfections are properties that contradict neither themselves nor any other perfection: "It [sc. positive] may also mean pure "attribution" as opposed to "privation" (or *containing*

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[1] The ontological proof itself is written in English. Gödel's notebook entries, which are written in German, were translated into English by Robert M. Adams (cf. Gödel 1995, 429). The German original reads: "Es ist möglich, die positive als perfectiv zu interpretieren, d. h., "rein gut", d. h., solche, welche keine Negation von "rein gut" impliziert." (Gödel 1995, 434).

[2] German original: "Die Interpretation von "positiver Eigenschaft" als "guter" (d. h., einer mit positivem Wert) ist unmöglich, weil der größte Vorteil + dem kleinsten Nachteil negativ ist." (Gödel 1995, 434).

privation)" (Gödel 1995, 404), and "a property is a perfective if and only if it implies no negation of a perfective" (Gödel 1995, 435 = notebook "Phil XIV", p. 106)[3]. Linked with these clarifications of the content of Gödelian positiveness is a final fifth assumption: If a first-order property is positive, then its positiveness is invariant with respect to the bearer of the first-order property ("independently of the accidental structure of the world", Gödel 1995, 404). In summary, Gödel-positiveness is at least a second-order perfect invariant value property.[4]

II. ONE AXIOM OF POSITIVENESS
AND TWO SENTENCES ON TRUTH

Let us now take a widely held assumption concerning truth:

Assumption 1   Truth is a first-order property of bearers of truth
                    values.

If truth is a first-order property and if positiveness is a second-order property, the question arises whether truth itself is positive or not. This question of positive truth creates problems when we employ two other assumptions. The first problem maker is Axiom 2 of Gödel's proof, which states that for each and every property φ the following is true: either the property itself or its complement is positive (Gödel 1995, 403).[5]

Axiom 2 $P(\neg\varphi) \leftrightarrow \neg P(\varphi)$[6]
             In every pair consisting of a property and its negation *one
             and only one* property is positive.

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[3] German original: "Eine Eigenschaft ist eine Perfective, dann und nur dann wenn sie keine Negation einer Perfectiven impliziert" (Gödel 1995, 434).

[4] In the following, "positiveness" and "positive" always stand for "Gödel-positiveness" and "Gödel-positive."

[5] In Sobel's and other publications, which follow notes on Gödel's proof in Dana Scott's hand, this axiom is Axiom 1 (Sobel 1987, 242; 257; Sobel 2004, 119).

[6] Gödel originally uses the following notation: $P(\varphi) \vee P(\sim\varphi)$, where "$\vee$" is an exclusive "or". This is equivalent to Scott's notation $P(\neg\varphi) \leftrightarrow \neg P(\varphi)$ (Sobel 1987, 257) which is short for $\Box\,\forall\varphi[P(\neg\varphi) \leftrightarrow \neg P(\varphi)]$ (see Sobel 2004, 119).

This axiom can easily be divided up into two axioms, each of which must then be treated separately:

Axiom 2.1 $\neg P(\varphi) \rightarrow P(\neg\varphi)$[7]
                    At least one member of every pair consisting of a property and its negation is positive.

Axiom 2.2 $P(\neg\varphi) \rightarrow \neg P(\varphi)$[8]
                    At the most one member of every pair consisting of a property and its negation is positive.

The second group of problem makers is the following group of two self-referential sentences concerning truth values:

   (A) The truth value of A is not positive.
   (B) The truth value of B is positive.

The self-referential sentences A and B are not trivial, not paradoxical and not meaningless. They are not trivial because they are neither analytical nor can they be derived from analytical sentences. Their truth value cannot be determined immediately. They are not paradoxical, since it is not the case that they are true if and only if they are false. Furthermore, they are not meaningless, since they are syntactically well formed and the concepts used in them, when taken together, produce a thought that can be considered as true or false. The self-referentiality of the two sentences is on its own no reason to consider them meaningless, since such sentences as "This sentence contains five words" seem to be capable of truth.

III. ARE TRUTH VALUES POSITIVE?

Accepting these assumptions one may ask what truth value the sentences A and B have. For A, there are two possibilities.

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[7] Short for $\Box\, \forall\varphi[\neg P(\varphi) \rightarrow P(\neg\varphi)]$.
[8] Short for $\Box\, \forall\varphi[P(\neg\varphi) \rightarrow \neg P(\varphi)]$.

If A is true, the truth value of A is not positive. If the truth value of A is not positive, then what A expresses is the case and A is true. Therefore, A is true if and only if the truth value of A is not positive.

If A is not true, then what A expresses is not the case and the truth value of A is positive. If the truth value of A is positive, then what A expresses is not the case and A is not true. Therefore, A is not true if and only if the truth value of A is positive.

If A is true, the truth value of A cannot at the same time be not true, since A would then be true and not true at the same time and this would be a contradiction. The same holds good for the case in which A is not true. Here, too, it is the case that when A is not true its truth value is also not true. The result, therefore, is that the truth of A is not a positive property and the non-truth of A is a positive property:

1. The non-truth of A is positive.
2. The truth of A is not positive.

Applying the axiom 2.1 we get for sentence 2 the result:

3. If the truth of A is not positive, then the non-truth of A is positive.

Taking sentence 2 and 3 together we get *per modus ponens* the result:

4. The non-truth of A is positive.

In the case of sentence B one accordingly gets different results:

5. The non-truth of B is not positive.
6. The truth of B is positive.

Applying axiom 2.1 to sentence 5 produces the result:

7. The truth of B is positive.

If we accept axiom 2.1, we have the result that, both on the assumption of the truth of sentence A and on the assumption of the non-truth of sentence A, the non-truth of A is positive. In the case of B the situation is the other way round. Both on the assumption of the truth of B and on the assumption of the non-truth of B, the truth of B is positive.

IV. POSITIVENESS IS INVARIANT

If positive properties are perfections and positiveness relates to the
perfection of the property, then the perfection of the property is not
affected by the fact that it may possibly be exemplified by various
individuals. If, for example, pure beauty is positive, then it is a matter of
indifference with respect to the positiveness of pure beauty who or what
exhibits pure beauty.[9]

Let us now take, in addition, the following axiom of positiveness
invariance (PosInv):

Axiom PosInv   For all x, for all φ: If something x possesses the
                  property φ and φ is positive, then the positiveness of
                  φ is invariant with respect to the bearer x of φ.

If we apply the axiom of positiveness invariance to sentence 4, we get the
result:

  8.   If the non-truth of A is positive, then non-truth is positive.

Taking sentence 4 and 8 together we get *per modus ponens* the result:

  9.   Non-truth is positive. $P(\neg T)$

If we apply the axiom of positiveness invariance to sentence 7, we get the
result:

  10.   If the truth of B is positive, then truth is positive.

Finally, taking sentence 7 and 10 together we get the result:

  11.   Truth is positive. $P(T)$

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[9] See also Gödel's axiom 3 (= Sobel 1987 axiom 4): $P(\varphi) \rightarrow \Box P(\varphi)$ (Gödel 1995,
403).

V. THE PARADOX OF POSITIVE TRUTH

There are precisely four ways in which the meaningful sentences A and B can relate to one another logically: both sentences are true, both are not true, or, in each case, one is true and the other is not true. A simple formal proof shows that each of the four instances leads to a formal contradiction if we add axiom 2.2.

1. $T(A) \wedge T(B)$: $P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$

$P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$ + axiom 2.2   leads to *contradiction:*
$\neg P(\neg T) \wedge P(\neg T)$

Proof:

	1. $P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$	
	2. $\forall \varphi(P(\neg \varphi) \rightarrow \neg P(\varphi))$	axiom 2.2
	3. $\forall \varphi(P(\varphi) \rightarrow \neg P(\neg \varphi))$	from 2, contrapositive of axiom 2.2
	4. $P(T) \rightarrow \neg P(\neg T)$	$\forall$-elimination, T/φ in 3
	5. $P(T)$	from 1, simplification
	6. $\neg P(\neg T)$	from 4 und 5, modus ponens
	7. $P(\neg T)$	from 1, simplification
Therefore:	8. $\neg P(\neg T) \wedge P(\neg T)$	from 6 and 7, introduction of conjunction

Q.E.D.

2. $\neg T(A) \wedge \neg T(B)$: $P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$

$P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$ + axiom 2.2   leads to *contradiction:*
$\neg P(\neg T) \wedge P(\neg T)$

Proof as in 1.

3. $T(A) \wedge \neg T(B)$: $P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$

$P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$ + axiom 2.2   leads to *contradiction:*
$\neg P(\neg T) \wedge P(\neg T)$

Proof as in 1.

4. $\neg T(A) \wedge T(B)$: $P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$

$\qquad\qquad$ $P(\neg T) \wedge P(T)$ + axiom 2.2 $\qquad$ leads to *contradiction:*
$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ $\neg P(\neg T) \wedge P(\neg T)$

$\qquad$ *Proof as in 1.*

VI. RESULTS

The statements A and B concerning the positiveness of their truth values produce, on the assumption of Gödel's axioms 2.1, 2.2 and the axiom of positiveness invariance, a paradox. The individual sentences A and B taken together can neither be true nor not true; nor can, in each case, the one be true and the other not true. It is clear that each of the four possibilities produces a formal contradiction. We assumed, however, that the sentences A and B are not trivial, not paradoxical and not meaningless.

This result is valid not only for Gödel's positive property P but for any second-order property ψ that is integrated into a formal system that, in turn, contains axioms that are at least structurally analogous to the axioms 2.1, 2.2 and to the axiom of positiveness invariance. The puzzle, which has to be solved, arises when one takes in addition self-referential statements like A and B concerning the positiveness (or some ψ-ness) of the truth values of A and B. Hence, it seems that the problem is not caused by Gödel's positiveness property alone but also – as in the other familiar paradoxes of truth – by the predicate of truth and by the self-referentiality of the sentences. How the problem is produced by the joint effect of predicates of positiveness and truth is a question that still remains to be solved.[10]

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SOFT CONTEXTUALISM IN THE CONTEXT
OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

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Abstract. When trying to do justice to the discourse of a certain religion it is often implicitly assumed that one's analysis should accord with and respect the opinions held by the people preaching and practicing that religion. One reason for this assumption may be the acceptance of a more general thesis, that adherents of a given religious tradition cannot fail to know the proper content and function of the language and concepts constitutive of it. In this article, the viability of this thesis is explored through an investigation of the extent to which people belonging to a certain religion may be in error about what they mean. I assume that people, if mistaken, are wrong according to a standard which is mind-dependent enough for them to be committed and accountable to it but, at the same time, mind-independent enough for them to be mistaken about it. I try to account for this delicate balance by identifying the standard with a social norm, a mind-independent object of worship or people's intuitive judgement.

I. INTRODUCTION

To account for the content and purpose of religious language and concepts is an old and difficult task. Many have taken on themselves to present a proper account, but no one seems to have come up with a proposal which all or most people agree on. The objective of the following article is not to present such an account, but to examine some issues that need to be settled before any such account can be properly assessed. Most basically, how does one define and measure the accuracy of such an account? What facts should be considered and respected if one wishes to do justice to the language and concepts of a certain religious tradition? Must one's account, for instance, be accepted by the religious people who belong to the tradition? Or can one rather assume this to be less

important, perhaps by thinking that the people may be mistaken about the content or function of the discourse constitutive of the religion they themselves preach and practice?[1] If the latter, to what extent or in what sense may they be thought to be mistaken? In the following, a sequence of possible responses to this question is considered. Each response, except for the initial one, is presented as a development of the previous one.

I proceed as follows: In the next section, I attend to one specific aspect of D. Z. Phillips' position on how to analyse the content and function of religious language. In connection to this aspect, I put forward a distinction between 'soft' and 'strong' contextualism. Strong contextualism is the thesis that only people who belong to and practice a certain tradition or system, like a religious one, can make sense of the language and concepts employed within it; people outside the system or tradition cannot. Soft contextualism is the thesis that people who belong to and practice a certain system or tradition cannot be mistaken about the function and content of the concepts and language constitutive of it. The soft thesis states that people who use a certain language and certain concepts regularly and with serious intent know the proper function and content of these. The second of the two theses is the central focus of the present article, which mainly consists of an investigation of the viability of the thesis and of what reason one may have to adjust or reject it. Section III presents a preparatory analysis of what would constitute a justified rejection or qualification of the thesis, which brings forward the notion of a 'conceptual mistake.' In section IV I propose an 'anti-individualistic' construal of the thesis, which, when applied to the religious context, amounts to the idea that at least some members of a religious community know the proper function and content of the religious concepts and language used by most or all its members. In section V I examine the possibility of going beyond this proposal by exploring to what extent a whole community of religious people can be mistaken about what they mean in the sense of being mistaken about the nature of a mind-independent object of worship while yet referring determinately to it. In the last section, I continue to pursue this question

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[1] By 'function' I mean for instance if the use of language is descriptive, prescriptive and so on. The question about the nature of the language, e.g. whether it is metaphorical or not, can also be tied to this functional aspect.

by exploring in what sense people within the community can possess and employ a 'sortal' for the object of worship, which is required to refer to it, while being mistaken about the proper content of this sortal.

II. SOFT AND STRONG CONTEXTUALISM

People who study and analyse religious discourse naturally seek to do justice to its content and purpose. It is however not evident what it is to account for this aspect of religion or how it should be done. This circumstance may be exemplified by attending to what is often called a 'Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion' and the discussion it has aroused. One distinguishing and well-known feature of this Wittgensteinian position is the claim that many religious people and scholars have failed to appreciate what religion and God-talk are all about. They have missed the distinctiveness of religious concepts and have not realized that the content and function of these are not the same as for concepts used in different, non-religious, contexts. D. Z. Phillips, as is well known, was one who persistently argued this to be the case.[2]

A common response to Phillips' charge is that, to the extent that such an interpretive mistake has been made, it is rather Phillips and people accepting his account who are the ones guilty of it. They are the ones who misrepresent the content and purpose of religious language and concepts. To back this up, one usually appeals to the fact that many religious devotees do not appear to feel quite at home with Phillips' account of what they mean. This, it is argued, must definitely rule out Phillips' analysis. For instance, not so long ago John Hick wrote:

> In the end, Phillips was implying that religious people don't mean what they say, but that he knows differently and better than them what they must mean. This constitutes a fundamental flaw in his philosophy of religion: he both appealed to and yet contradicted the use of religious language by devout religious people. He based his case on the actual use of religious

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[2] For a good presentation of this circumstance, see Richard Messer, *Does God's Existence Need Proof?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 49-50. For a more recent and very thorough exposition of Phillips' approach, see P. F. Bloemendaal, *Grammars of Faith: a Critical Evaluation of D. Z. Phillips's Philosophy of Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

language by religious people, within their form of life, but rejected their own understanding of what they are doing.[3]

According to Hick, one cannot do justice to a religious language while disqualifying the account of it presented by people seriously engaged in it. This is, however, precisely what Phillips, in Hick's eyes, is doing and what disqualifies his analysis. In responding to this criticism, Phillips does not so much object to this description of what he does as he questions what's wrong with it. Phillips writes that:

> [T]he account given by a believer has no *automatic* philosophical warrant. It, too, must be conceptually faithful to the belief. If we say, 'Who better to ask than the believers?', we should reflect on the fact that if we asked 'thinking people' to tell us what they mean by 'thinking,' a confused Cartesianism would be returned with a thumping majority. We cannot do philosophy by Gallup poll. Religion like, 'thinking,' can be the victim of widespread friendly fire.[4]

In doing conceptual justice to religious language one cannot then, according to Phillips, rest one's case on what the people employing it are thinking about it because they may also be mistaken about its proper function or content. In reasoning like this, Phillips may be held to object to two theses, what I call *soft* and *strong contextualism*. Strong contextualism is the idea that only people belonging to a certain religious tradition or community can understand the proper content and function of the concepts and language employed within it. People outside the community or tradition cannot do this to the same extent.[5] Even if

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[3] John Hick, "D. Z. Phillips on God and Evil," *Religious Studies* 43 (2007): 440.

[4] D. Z. Phillips, "Pictures of Eternity – A Reply to Mario von der Ruhr" in *D. Z. Phillips' Contemplative Philosophy of Religion: Questions and Responses*, ed. Andy F. Sanders (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 78. Phillips is not responding directly to the passage quoted from Hick.

[5] As is well known, Phillips is often attributed this position. Mark Addis seems to think that Phillips is a 'fideist' and then explains fideism as the position that '[R]eligious language is intelligible only to those who participate in the religious form of life. [. . .] Religious language constitutes a distinct linguistic practice which non-participants in the form of life could not grasp and show to be incoherent or erroneous.', see Mark Addis, "D. Z. Phillips' Fideism in Wittgenstein's Mirror" in *Wittgenstein and Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Robert L. Arrington et al. (London: Routledge, 2001), 85. To the extent that

one is sceptical of strong contextualism, one may still accept that people who preach and practice a certain religion know or establish the content and function of the main concepts of that religion. That is, one may still find it reasonable to assume that people employing a certain language and certain concepts regularly and seriously are in a good position to know the function and content of the language and the concepts, for how else are they, for instance, able to operate with them confidently and seemingly accurately? To accept this idea is to accept the thesis of soft contextualism. Soft contextualism does not entail that people "outside" the religion cannot come to know the proper function and content of the concepts and language used within it, only that people "inside" the religion cannot fail to. If one accepts this thesis, one may draw upon it to argue that a philosophical analysis of what the concepts within a certain religion mean should agree with and respect the opinion about this matter held by people belonging to that religion. This is one important motive for exploring the nature and intelligibility of soft contextualism. As we have seen, when trying to do justice to religious concepts, Phillips, for instance, thinks that the religious people employing the concepts can be mistaken or ignorant about what they actually mean. It is in virtue of this that I regard him as an opponent, not only to strong contextualism, but also to soft contextualism.

In what follows, I will focus on soft contextualism. The reason for this is that the principle idea of soft contextualism has not been the subject of as much discussion and investigation as the principle idea of strong contextualism, nor has it been investigated to the degree it deserves. Our investigation of soft contextualism will, however, also be relevant for anyone interested in, or even defending, strong contextualism. If we, for instance, as a result of the impending investigation, were to become sceptical of soft contextualism, we would also seem to have a reason for doubting the intelligibility of strong contextualism. It would for instance be difficult to maintain that only people belonging to a religious tradition can know the proper content of the concepts employed within it (which is the thesis of strong contextualism) if they can be mistaken about the

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Addis suggests that Phillips thinks that only religious people can understand the proper meaning of religious language, I think Addis is wrong. Apart from the fact that such an idea would appear to be in direct opposition to Phillips' criticism of soft contextualism, the textual evidence for thinking that this is not Phillips' position seems quite extensive.

content (which a rejection of soft contextualism would imply). It has been helpful to consider Phillips' position in explaining soft contextualism. However, in exploring the intelligibility of this thesis, I proceed without focusing especially on his position as I wish to approach the matter from a more general perspective.

III. THE VIABILITY OF SOFT CONTEXTUALISM. – A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

We should begin our investigation of soft contextualism by initially making clear what would motivate a rejection of it. That is, what would qualify as an instance of people being ignorant or mistaken about the content of the concepts and language they employ? I will propose and in the following work with the idea that one distinguishing feature of such mistakes, which I call *conceptual mistakes*, is that people who are guilty of them are mistaken according to a standard for correct thinking about the language and concepts they employ which they hold themselves committed and accountable to. The possibility of such mistakes presupposes a delicate balance. The standard in question should be objective and mind-independent enough for them to be able to be mistaken about it, but subjective and mind-dependent enough for them to be accountable and committed to it, to be what they "actually" mean or should mean. Before we begin to examine if people may be guilty of conceptual mistakes, let us attend just a bit more to why this is a relevant question to consider. The idea of a conceptual mistake, if sensible, can help us account for how we may criticise a religion from within the religion itself, by for instance claiming that certain rituals or beliefs are not doing justice to the standard implicit in and constitutive of that religion and which people, in virtue of believing in it, may be held committed and accountable to. For this reason, one can also draw upon the notion of a conceptual mistake to question a too simple distinction between 'prescriptive' and 'descriptive' accounts of a religious tradition. Accounts not directly in line with the ordinary and commonly accepted interpretation of a religious tradition are often considered prescriptive or revisionary ones. The notion of a conceptual mistake may cast doubt on the legitimacy of this tendency.

Let me also make clear what seems to be the main problem in establishing a conceptual mistake: The fact that people usually seem to be committed to a standard by knowing it. If this is true, one can surely wonder how people can be committed to a standard while being mistaken about it. We may phrase the problem with regard to concepts: To possess a concept is often equated with knowing how one should employ it. In showing that people can make conceptual mistakes, we thus need to show how people can know enough to possess and to be committed to a certain concept while, at the same time, know too little to have infallible knowledge about its proper function and content.

IV. A SOCIAL MODIFICATION OF SOFT CONTEXTUALISM

How, then, can one commit a conceptual mistake? One initial possibility would be to accept the *anti-individualistic* proposal that a person can possess a concept, even when having a partly mistaken or incomplete account of it, in virtue of belonging to a community of people in which at least someone has a complete and accurate account of it. One well-known defender of this proposal is Tyler Burge, who argues that people should be thought to possess the common concept of, for example, a contract even when, for instance, thinking that an oral agreement does not constitute a binding contract. If many enough of the beliefs they have about the concept of a contract are accurate, they should be thought to possess our ordinary concept of it rather than a personal and deviant one. It would then also be correct to describe what they mean and what beliefs and thoughts they have by relying on the ordinary concept. It would for example be correct to state that 'Susan thinks that she just signed a contract,' even if her idea of a contract is incorrect. Of course, what is true for the concept of a contract is also held to be true for many concepts.[6] What concept a person has is thus not settled by and limited to what she has in 'her head,' that is, what she believes the proper content is. What someone has in 'her head' may also not settle what she can refer to. To consider a well-known example from Hilary Putnam, a person

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[6] See Tyler Burge, "Individualism and the Mental" (1979), in *Foundations of Mind, Philosophical Essays, vol. 2*, ed. Tyler Burge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 105-7.

can be judged to refer determinately to elms even though he does not know how to distinguish an elm from a beech.[7] As long as the person is a member of a community of people in which someone else is able to tell them apart, he can rely on that person's expertise.

A person can then possess a concept while being mistaken about its content because she may not only possess the concept in virtue of having an accurate or complete account of it. She can also possess the concept in virtue of having an accurate enough account of it and by being a member of a community of people in which some people have a full and correct account of it. What concept she has and is committed to thus depend on what community she belongs to. Being a member includes being committed and accountable to the communal norm for the concept, which is the same as what better informed people accept as the proper content for it.[8] One reason for accepting this account of concept-possession is that it seems to do justice to our ordinary practice of concept-attribution and our commitment to a socially shared and accepted norm for thinking about the world. If we adopt this picture of what it is to have and employ a concept and to be committed to a standard for proper thinking about its content, we seem to have some reason for questioning soft contextualism because according to this picture, people may have a concept without having a proper account of it. We also realise that one possible reason for assuming the correctness of soft contextualism from the outset is that one adopts an individualistic theory of language-use and concept-possession. Recall, one common argument for soft contextualism is the idea that a person possesses a concept in virtue of knowing its content, for what else explains how he can operate with it? In drawing upon the social nature of language-use and concept-possession, anti-individualism requires less from an individual user of a language and concepts.

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[7] Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of "Meaning"" (1975), in *The Twin Earth Chronicles: Twenty Years of Reflection on Hilary Putnam's "The Meaning of 'Meaning'"*, ed. Andrew Pessin et al. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 12-14. Putnam calls this 'division of linguistic labor'.

[8] Burge thinks that 'Speakers commonly intend to be interpreted according to standards of usage that are in some respects better understood by others,' see Tyler Burge, "Social Anti-Individualism, Objective Reference," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 67 (2003): 684.

Of course, an advocate of soft contextualism may not regard anti-individualism as an accurate explanation of concept-possession and may simply refuse to acknowledge it. A more interesting response, and one that I will focus on, is the idea that anti-individualism does not so much call into question the doctrine of soft contextualism as it points to a sensible modification of it, or maybe a qualification of it assumed from the outset. Applying anti-individualism to, for example, a certain religious community would just mean that at least some people within the community know the proper function or content of the religious concepts or language used by most or all people within the community. As long as soft contextualism is not construed as the thesis that everyone who belongs to a certain community knows the content of the concepts and language employed within it, anti-individualism seems compatible with it. And in doing justice to the content and function of the concepts used within a community, it is thus enough that one's analysis is consistent with the opinion of some of its members, perhaps the ones considered to be authorities concerning what the concepts in question mean.

We can exemplify this version of soft contextualism by attending to what can be called 'traditional theism,' the religious worship of a transcendent subject, wholly or partly responsible for the creation and destiny of mankind. Let us assume a community of people preaching and practicing such theism. We may then propose that in order for soft contextualism to be true of such a religious community, the following must be true of it: (1) at least some people within it must know what they all mean and refer to by 'God' and related concepts and (2) the rest of the people can be less knowledgeable although competent enough to defer to the former group of people, in order to "mean what they mean." Such a religious community may be held to exemplify a 'communal' or 'social' type of soft contextualism.

V. ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A WHOLE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY BEING MISTAKEN

We ended the last section by construing a version of soft contextualism that defused the anti-individualistic objection to it, by making soft contextualism compatible with it. Is this then the end of the line? Have

we pushed our scepticism of soft contextualism as far as possible or may we push it just a little bit further? In exploring this matter, it seems natural to consider the possibility of a whole community of people, and not just some members of it, being mistaken about what they mean. The idea is not that everyone in the community must be mistaken about the content of a certain concept or word; perhaps not all people within the community employ it. We are rather wondering if it is possible for people to be incorrect concerning what they mean without being wrong relative to the standard set by someone else in the same community. The possibility of this being the case seems to presuppose a standard that everyone can be committed and accountable to while yet being mistaken about it. How may this come about? In trying to account for this delicate balance, one suggestion may be that the standard for what they mean by a certain concept or word is a mind-independent object referred to by the people. In virtue of being mind-independent, it would account for the required distance between it and the people for the people to be mistaken about it. Relating this to theism, we can equate the mind-independent object with the theistic God and suggest that people within the theistic community are committed to this object by referring to it. The relevant question would then be – to what extent and in what sense can the whole community be referentially committed to a possible God while having mistaken beliefs about its nature?

According to one traditional theory, religious people succeed in referring to God in virtue of having an identifying description of God. The description does not need to be complete but it must be correct and precise enough to pick out God. Without going into the details of this theory, which can be construed and interpreted differently, it seems to entail that the possibility for a community of people to refer determinately to God while being radically mistaken about God's nature is rather limited, due to the fact that they refer in virtue of knowing a true enough description of God. That is, if what they hold to be true of the object of worship is not uniquely true, or true at all, of it, one may claim that they either refer to something else (the object fitting the description) or nothing at all (if nothing or too much fits the description). The people may still be moderately mistaken about the nature of God but not to the extent that the identifying description of God is abandoned. We thus seem to have reached some conclusion regarding how mistaken a community

of religious people may be about what they mean. However, since this conclusion is relative to a certain theory on how religious people refer to the object of worship, one may of course wonder if this theory is the only game in town? Or may we adopt a different theory on how people refer to God which does not demand that they have a correct account of the object of worship?

The most natural option may be what is usually referred to as the 'causal' theory of reference developed by and mainly associated with Saul Kripke, Keith Donnellan and Hilary Putnam.[9] One general idea argued for in the name of this theory is that one does not refer to an object in virtue of having an accurate or identifying description of it because one can be held to refer successfully to it although one's description is not uniquely true, or true at all, of the object. With regard to how a proper name refers, Kripke, for instance, thinks that the name is initially attached to its bearer through a naming ceremony. People not attending the event, most people that is, can still refer to the individual given the name in virtue of intending, by the name, to refer to the same person as the one they got the name from or "everyone else" (if they have forgotten who they got the name from). The person they got it from, or "everyone else," in turn, has the same intention towards someone else and so on, creating a connection from the present user of the name back to the people at the naming ceremony. It is this link-to-link connection that usually lets us refer to a certain person although we may know very little about him or her. According to this idea, 'Aristotle' does not refer to the famous philosopher in virtue of the descriptive content associated with his name. This entails that 'Aristotle' would refer to the same person even if most of our beliefs about him turned out to be mistaken, that he, for instance, was not the author of *On Interpretation* and the *Metaphysics*.

More or less orthodox versions of the causal theory of reference have been used to account for how religious people refer to the object of worship. Drawing upon Putnam's, Kripke's and Donnellan's criticism of the descriptive theory and by assuming that we can refer to an object by describing its causal effect rather than knowing its true nature, Janet

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[9] See for instance Keith Donnellan, "Speaking of Nothing," *The Philosophical Review* 83 (1974): 3-31; Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of "Meaning""; Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981).

Martin Soskice thinks that we can refer to God, even if we are very ignorant or mistaken about God's nature.

> To employ an argument analogous to that which we have employed in the scientific case, we must claim to point to God via some effect and a more satisfactory way of doing so is to follow the more experiential lead of Aquinas and say that 'God is that which is the source and cause of all there is.' This does not demonstrate that there is a unified source nor that, if there is, it meets any description preferred by theists. As in the scientific case, to be a realist about reference is to be a 'fallibilist' about knowledge of the referent. Speakers may refer and yet be mistaken, even quite radically mistaken, as to the nature of that to which they refer.[10]

In a similar fashion, building extensively on Kripke's reasoning about how a proper name refers, William Alston argues that the referent of 'God' is picked out through a religious experience: 'God' refers to whatever some people come to face through that experience and people who have not had such an experience may defer to the ones who have. 'God,' then, does not refer in virtue of the descriptive content often associated with it. The object of the religious experience may not fit the descriptive content. In fact, the content can fit a different object not experienced by the people using the name. The object experienced is nonetheless what we refer to by 'God.'[11]

If we accept the causal theories suggested by Soskice and Alston on how people can refer to God, they entail that a religious community can be rather mistaken about the object of worship. This, in turn, would mean that our previous conclusion concerning how mistaken people can be about a possible God while still referring to it, based on the descriptive theory, must be modified. To bring out the difference between the two theories, assume that the descriptive content associated with 'God' within a certain theistic community does not apply to the entity causally responsible for the creation of the universe. Perhaps the property 'all-

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[10] Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 139. Soskice argues for a modified version of the causal theory by thinking that senses of words do matter, although not in the sense usually associated with the descriptivist theory. See Soskice, *Metaphor*, 132.

[11] William Alston, "Referring to God," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 24 (1988): 118-122.

knowing' is not true of the entity. If we were to rely on a descriptive theory, we may then be forced to conclude that the people have not referred to this entity and since they have not referred to it, they cannot be held to be mistaken in relation to it. On a causal theory, in contrast, we would not be forced to draw this conclusion. On both theories, an entire community of religious people may be mistaken about God's nature, but on the causal theory, the mistakes, it seems, can be rather big.

If we were to accept a causal theory of reference in the context of God-talk, the outcome of it would not appear unimportant. It would for instance offer a theist the possibility to substantially *change her religion* without *her changing religion* because what establishes the identity or continuity of the theistic religion is the divine subject referred to and, according to the current approach, the theist can remain referentially committed to this subject even when radically changing her beliefs about its nature. More precisely, the causal theory would, for example, provide a feminist minded scholar or devotee the ground needed for claiming that a removal of the masculine gender used in much theistic God-talk does not change what theists have been referentially committed to all along. Another outcome that is interesting with regard to the matter of soft contextualism is that people may not only be radically mistaken about the nature of what they refer to while still referring to it, but also about how they refer to it, for instance by incorrectly believing that some description of God is fixing the reference for 'God' while this, in fact, is not so. I return to this specific outcome in section VI.

One may however argue that the causal theory may fail to account for what a theist refers to by 'God.' The reason for this failure is that the information and procedure it relies on to pick out the object of worship is too imprecise. To exemplify this, suppose a person declared that God is 'whatever was causally responsible for me having a certain religious experience.' Is this account sufficient to make that person refer determinately to God? To some extent this will depend on what we mean by 'refer determinately,' but one may claim that the account 'God is whatever was causally responsible. . .' is too thin to do justice to what theistic people intend to refer to by 'God.' They do not identify God with whatever was causally responsible for some religious experience. For this object to be considered God it must be a certain kind of object and not just any kind of object. Perhaps it must be spiritual rather than material

and maybe also personal. If the object does not have such features it is not God.[12] To account for what people within the theistic community have referred to, we may thus have to accept that for an object to be considered God, it must fit a certain category, or set of categories. The category or categories may not be unique for the object. Let us call such a category or set of categories a *God-sortal*. The God-sortal then determines the extent to which theistic people can be wrong about a possible object of worship while still referring determinately to it. An entity, even if causally responsible for a religious experience, which does not fit the God-sortal, cannot be considered the proper referent – God that is.[13] Of course, the sortal alone would not be enough to account for what theistic people refer to by 'God.' To the extent that we accept the causal theory in this context, the sortal should be regarded as an important complement to it.[14] People committed to a God-sortal seem to be committed and accountable to something less than an identifying description of the object of worship, but to something more than a 'causal description,' like 'God is whatever was causally responsible for me having this religious experience.' Recall, the general purpose of this whole discussion is to try to establish to what extent a mind-independent object of worship can constitute a standard according to which religious people can be mistaken about what they mean. Perhaps then the proper response to this question is: To the extent that the mind-independent object of

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[12] See for instance Michael Durrant, "Reference and Critical Realism," *Modern Theology* 5 (1989): 139-140; See also Peter Byrne, *Prolegomena to Religious Pluralism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), 45, 51 for a similar idea.

[13] We may perhaps exemplify the idea of a sortal by returning to our previous example with Aristotle. Although we may accept that 'Aristotle' would still refer to Aristotle even if it was discovered that he was not the author of *On Interpretation* or the *Metaphysics*, or perhaps any philosophical text, we would not, I think, be quite as open-minded if we discovered that 'Aristotle' was in fact the name of a cat. The reason for this, I suggest, is that a cat is not the kind of being we intend to refer to by 'Aristotle.' A cat does not fit our sortal for 'Aristotle.'

[14] By introducing the idea of a 'God-sortal' I do not wish to engage in a metaphysical discussion about God's nature by for instance opposing the idea that God does not belong to any genus. I am only attending to what people commonly hold to be essential for God, that is, what they think an object must be like to qualify as God and to be the object they have intended to refer to. The current suggestion, that for an object to be God it must be of a certain kind, is intended to capture this attitude of many religious people and thinkers. Of course, the precise content of the God-sortal can be discussed.

worship fits the sortal associated with it. We thus seem to have reached some conclusion about just how mistaken a whole community of theistic people may be about what they mean.

VI. ON THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING MISTAKEN ABOUT THE GOD-SORTAL

Have we then, at last, come to the end? Have we come to a conclusion about the extent to which people of a theistic community can be mistaken about the object of worship and still refer to it? It surely appears so. Recall that to commit a conceptual mistake is to do wrong according to a standard one can be held to be committed to. If the standard is a mind-independent object, one must be referentially committed to it and this appears to presuppose that the object fits our sortal for it. The sortal thus determines how mistaken people may be about what they mean, 'mean' in the sense of what they refer to. Still, one cannot help but wonder if it would be possible for people to possess and employ a God-sortal while being mistaken and ignorant about its true content. In this last section, I consider this possibility.

To know the sortal for the object one refers to is to know what kind of object it is. Drawing upon this account of the sortal we can reconnect to the Wittgensteinian tradition, attended to in section II, and its idea of 'depth grammar' since 'grammar tells what *kind* of *object* anything is.'[15] Simplifying the concept of depth grammar somewhat, the basic idea seems to be that for a certain sort of object, we have a 'grammatical rule-book' establishing what would be sensible to claim and think about it. For instance, to assert that a certain person is in a good mood is sensible, regardless if it is true or not since 'being in a good mood' is a property that may properly be attributed to a human being. In contrast, to declare that the tree outside my office has had a bad day and is looking forward to tomorrow is neither true nor untrue, just nonsense; a tree does not look forward to anything. We may connect this to Putnam's example with elms attended to in section IV. A person may be held to refer to

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[15] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), paragraph 373.

elms even if he does not know the precise difference between elms and beeches, but if he does not even know what a tree is, what kind of object it is, he can be held to be too ignorant to refer to elms; he then lacks knowledge of the sortal/grammar for the object he intends to refer to.

Remember, Phillips thinks that religious people can be mistaken about what they mean. His position is complex and heterogeneous but one core idea is certainly that what religious people claim and think may not make sense relative to the grammar for the concepts they employ and the objects they refer to. With regard to this, but also with regard to the specific need for a God-sortal in the case of referring to God, one may wonder if people can be mistaken or ignorant about the sortal or grammar for a certain object. That is, can they be mistaken and ignorant about what they themselves consider to be the God-sortal? For people to be mistaken or ignorant in this sense, they should be wrong relative to a standard they hold themselves committed and accountable to. As previously assumed, for people to be mistaken and ignorant in this sense, the standard must be mind-independent to some extent, in order to account for how they can be mistaken about it, but not too mind-independent, because that would make it hard to hold the people accountable and committed to it. We thus need to ask: Does the possibility of such mistakes extend to how religious people have and know a God-sortal?

One idea would be to distinguish between *implicit* and *explicit* knowledge of the God-sortal. In presenting this option, we can attend to one contemporary theory on conceptual mistakes and analysis. Frank Jackson thinks that when we are being presented with a "Gettier-case" and through this come to question our old and traditional definition of knowledge, we do not seem to conclude that we have been misapplying the concept of knowledge and that we need to change our use of it. Rather, we seem to think that the common definition of knowledge as 'justified true belief' does not capture what has been implicit in our actual employment of the concept all along. In this we have a conceptual mistake rather than a conceptual change because we hold ourselves committed and accountable to how we employ a concept rather than to how we define it.[16] According to this position, people can possess a concept by knowing

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[16] Frank Jackson, *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defense of Conceptual Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 36, 38.

how to categorize certain objects as being of a general kind. They can for instance be able to identify certain objects as tables, although not being able to explicitly account for how they do it. As Christopher Peacocke puts it: 'thinkers can be good at classifying cases, and bad at articulating the principles guiding their classifications.'[17] People may thus be unable to present a definition of the concept of a table or what rule they follow in categorising tables as 'tables.' They may of course have an idea about what the proper content of the concept of a table is, but, according to the current theory, they do not possess the concept of a table in virtue of believing in a certain, correct or incorrect, definition of it; much in the same sense as people, according to the causal theory of reference, do not refer to an object in virtue of having an accurate account of it.

If we accept this idea about what it is to have a concept, we can draw upon it to argue that religious people may be employing and committed to a certain God-sortal, while being mistaken about its precise content. If we agree on this, we also have a reason for questioning the specific version of soft contextualism previously considered, that people cannot use and be committed to a certain God-sortal while failing to know its true content. Once more we also come to challenge one general motive for soft contextualism, the idea that one has to know a concept properly to be thought to possess and employ it, for how can one use it intelligibly or successfully if not by knowing its content? To the extent that such knowledge is thought to be explicit, it does not, in fact, seem to be required. We may also perhaps obtain support for Phillips' conviction that one can do better justice to a certain religious concept by focusing on how it is used rather than on how its content and function are described by the religious people using it. Moreover, although we are drawing upon the distinction between implicit and explicit content of a concept to show how a person can be mistaken about the proper content of his own God-sortal, we may extend the distinction beyond this particular case to other religious concepts. We can then account for how a whole community of religious people can be mistaken about what they mean by the concepts they employ without appealing to a mind-independent object. Instead we can appeal to a "mind-independent" content of the

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[17] Christopher Peacocke, "Implicit Conceptions, Understanding and Rationality," *Philosophical Issues* 9 (1998): 51.

concepts, mind-independent in the sense of not being explicitly known. This may be an important outcome in that many religious concepts do not pick out a mind-independent object or subject in the same sense that the concepts of a tree, gold or God may do.

Still, one may think that the possibility of being mistaken in the manner currently considered does not apply to every concept. This might be correct. As Paul Grice once remarked, it does not appear possible to know or have the concept of a father without knowing what a male parent is, although one can have and employ the concept of awe without knowing or agreeing upon the conventional definition of it, a 'mixture of fear and admiration.'[18] The distinction between knowing a concept implicitly and explicitly does not seem to apply to the concept of a father because if we change the explicit account of what we mean by 'father' (male parent), we also change the concept. Perhaps one wants to draw upon this possible limitation of the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge of a concept and claim that the distinction doesn't apply to the God-sortal or the context of religious concepts in general. If true, this would entail that the current criticism of soft contextualism, drawing upon this distinction, may not extend to the religious version of soft contextualism currently considered. How, then, can one settle if it does apply to the religious case or not?

Perhaps one can propose that the distinction primarily applies to concepts the content of which we may typically be uncertain about, such as 'time' or 'personal identity.' If one accepts this, admittedly imprecise, criterion for when the distinction applies, one can argue that the God-sortal and religious concepts in general are unaffected by it in virtue of not being among the concepts we usually wonder about. Alan Bailey, for instance, seems to accept this latter idea.

> We normally have no difficulty, for example, in telling other people what time it is or how much time a particular activity is likely to take. However when we stand back from such mundane activities and ask ourselves 'What is time?', we are suddenly plunged into confusion. In the case of religious discourse, though, this phenomenon is almost unknown. If someone who is at ease using the word 'God' in prayer and catechisms asks 'What is God?',

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[18] Paul Grice, "Postwar Oxford Philosophy" (1956), in *Studies in the Way of Words*, ed. Paul Grice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 176.

that person rarely has any difficulty in arriving at an answer with which he or she is fairly comfortable.[19]

I disagree with Bailey. Just like people will have a hard time, not in saying what time it is, but in saying what time is, I think that religious people can initially find it easy to talk to or about God, but difficult to make sense of the concept of God if asked about it. And even if they are not uncertain or confused about what they mean from the outset, it does not appear all that difficult to make them wonder about it. Of course, we do not seem to be confused or uncertain about the proper content of all concepts, but the distinction between confusing and non-confusing concepts doesn't coincide with a distinction between religious and non-religious concepts. Moreover, it also appears difficult, if not impossible, to separate religious and non-religious contexts and concepts. For instance, if our concept of time is a confusing one (as Bailey appears to think), so must the concept of God (as a being outside time) be. So even if people may not be mistaken or ignorant about all concepts they employ, this fact would not by itself entail that religious concepts are not among the perplexing ones. The current criticism of soft contextualism, drawing upon the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge, thus appears to apply to the notion of a God-sortal and the context of religion in general. At least we have seen no reason for why it should not be thought to do so. Religious people can thus be mistaken about the God-sortal along the general line suggested so far in this section.

However, the present suggestion about how religious people can be wrong concerning the God-sortal may also be used to defend a different kind of soft contextualism, one drawing upon the notion of 'intuitive judgement.' People within a religion who may be ignorant about the proper and implicit content of a religious concept, like the God-sortal, can still be held to have an intuitive account of it. One reason for thinking so is the following picture of what is going on:

> According to a widely held view, when philosophers analyze a concept they are seeking an explicit account of the concept's content – a content that they

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[19] Alan Bailey, "Wittgenstein and the Interpretation of Religious Discourse", in *Wittgenstein and Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Robert L. Arrington et al (London: Routledge, 2001), 135.

already know in some implicit manner. This implicit knowledge provides the intuitions that guide us in formulating proposed analyses, and allows us to recognize counterinstances to these proposals. Our inability simply to state the correct analysis is explained by this distinction between the implicit knowledge we already have and the explicit knowledge we seek.[20]

One can, then, argue that when working out an analysis of a certain religious concept, one should consider our intuitive judgement about it, because this is believed to reveal what we implicitly know about it, and what we thus hold ourselves accountable to. One may also claim that it would be peculiar if people employing a concept on a regular basis had no firm and reliable intuition about its proper content. That would seem peculiar in that our intuitive judgements must have a source. They don't come from nowhere, and it would appear natural to think that when we reflect intuitively about the proper use or content of a concept, what we do is to abstract information from our actual employment of it. This appeal to intuitive judgement would lead us back to a certain kind of soft contextualism, one consisting of the idea that people using a certain concept regularly and seriously cannot fail to have a reliable intuitive judgement about its proper content. It may not be easy for them to figure out the proper content, but also not impossible. Interestingly enough, the current suggestion also seems to lead back to an 'individualistic' kind of soft contextualism in that people's implicit and intuitive judgements do not depend on or defer to someone else within the community they belong to. The suggestion can also perhaps account for how religious people can be justified in opposing Phillips' account of what they mean: Even if they can be wrong about the God-sortal or the grammar for some object, they cannot be too wrong about this while being committed to it, and the devotee's intuitive judgement about this determines the extent of her commitment, and thus how mistaken she may be.

Have we, then, finally come to the end in our investigation of the nature and status of soft contextualism? Does our intuitive judgement about a concept constitute the norm for accurate thinking about it, which we hold ourselves committed to and according to which we may be wrong? One reason for thinking so is that it appears difficult to go

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[20] Harold Brown, "Why Do Conceptual Analysts Disagree?," *Metaphilosophy* 30 (1999): 33.

beyond intuitive judgement. For instance, even someone arguing for the causal theory of reference, and who perhaps claims that what we "have in mind" when referring is less important than usually assumed for us to be successful in this, may nonetheless be thought to base his argument on an intuitive idea about what it is in virtue of which people refer to a certain object.[21] The criticism of a certain religious kind of soft contextualism, the view that people cannot be mistaken about God beyond an identifying description of God, may thus depend on the accuracy of a different kind of religious soft contextualism, the view that a religious person cannot be mistaken beyond his or her intuitive judgement about the God-sortal. We thus appear to have come to the end of the road, but in some sense perhaps also just the beginning of it, because the notion of intuitive judgement raises many questions. To end this article, I only want to point out one of them.

One question concerning this matter is: is an intuitive judgement what constitutes the proper content of a concept or is it our evidence in figuring this out? To the extent that we accept the former option, we have a reason for thinking that religious people cannot be very wrong about what they mean in that what they intuitively judge themselves to mean is constitutive of what they mean. One problem with this option is that if someone was to change his intuitive judgement, he would then automatically change his concept; or if people within the same religious tradition were to differ in what they find intuitively correct, they would, it seems, have different concepts. This may seem incorrect in that it would appear to make conceptual change and diversity all too easy to come by. To avoid this outcome, one can soften the relationship between a concept and our intuitive judgement about it by regarding the latter as evidence for what we mean by the former; as information in need of assessment rather than conclusive and infallible knowledge about the concept's content. However, if we accept this "evidential" reading of intuitive judgement, we appear to reopen the matter explored throughout this article. Once more we seem to accept that we can be ignorant and mistaken about what we mean due to the fact that an intuitive judgement is inconclusive or can be interpreted wrongly. If so, then we need to

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[21] See for instance Frank Jackson, "Reference and Description Revisited," *Philosophical Perspectives* 12 (1998): 213 for this idea.

examine to what standard an intuitive judgement is accountable and according to which it can be judged correct or incorrect. This is surely an important and interesting question and I hope to be able to return to it another time.

Throughout this article I have sought to show some of the different senses in which religious people can be mistaken about what they mean. In closing, I should emphasize that I do not, of course, think that I have offered a complete investigation of this matter; much more should be said about each of the senses attended to. Nor do I wish to imply that only religious people may be mistaken in the senses considered. I do, however, consider the religious context as one of the most interesting ones, if not even the most interesting one, for pursuing questions about the sense in which or the extent to which people can be ignorant about what they mean. Hopefully I have made some contribution to showing how this can be and why.

DISCUSSIONS & REPLIES

CRITICAL NOTICE OF J. P. MORELAND'S
CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

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J. P. Moreland. *Consciousness and the Existence of God: A Theistic Argument*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

This book divides naturally into three parts. The first part consists of two chapters, the first of which sets out what Moreland takes to be 'the epistemic backdrop' against which 'the argument from consciousness' is properly assessed, and the second of which presents several 'versions' of 'the argument from consciousness.' The second part consists of five chapters, each of which is devoted to a close analysis of the work of a particular theorist: John Searle, Tim O'Connor, Colin McGinn, David Skrbina, and Philip Clayton. The third part consists of two chapters, the first of which develops and defends 'the Autonomy thesis'—roughly, the claim that, where central questions of philosophy have answers, those answers do not substantively depend on science—and the second of which argues that it is fear of God that drives 'current and confident acceptance of strong physicalism and naturalism and rejection of dualism' (176).

I have discussed much of the material in the first two chapters of this book elsewhere—see my chapter on arguments from consciousness in C. Meister, J. P. Moreland, and K. Sweis (eds.) (forthcoming). In this review, I propose to focus more attention on the final two chapters. However, I shall begin with a discussion of the presentation of 'the argument from consciousness' in Chapter Two.

I. 'THE ARGUMENT FROM CONSCIOUSNESS'

Moreland begins with a 'form' of 'the argument' that works by inference to the best explanation:

> According to AC, on a theistic metaphysic, one already has an instance of consciousness and other mental entities, e.g. an unembodied mind, in God. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that finite consciousness or other mental entities should exist in the world. However, on a naturalist view, mental entities are so strange and out of place that their existence (or regular correlation with physical entities) defies adequate explanation. There appear to be two realms operating in causal harmony, and theism provides the best explanation of this fact. (32)

It is clear that Moreland gives little weight to this argument, since this is the sum total of his presentation and defence of it; and perhaps that is just as well. Suppose—to take the case most favourable to Moreland—the naturalist agrees that there are brute regular correlations between mental and physical entities. Does that establish—as Moreland seems to suppose—that there is an inference to theism as the best explanation? Hardly! For, in order to determine which is the better explanation here, we have to make an accounting of other theoretical virtues: what is the price of the theistic explanation—what ontological, ideological and other additional theoretical commitments does it involve; how well does the theistic explanation comport with other well-established theories; and—at least given the presentation offered by Moreland—how, exactly, does theism *explain* those regular correlations between mental and physical entities? (Suppose, for example, that the early European explorers who came to Australia had found that the local inhabitants possessed mathematical knowledge far in advance of the then current European state of the art. Suppose, in particular, that those local inhabitants could perform immensely long and complicated calculations in the blink of an eye. Should the early European explorers have said: it is hardly surprising that these abilities should exist in finite consciousnesses, since they already exist in an unembodied mind, viz. God? That seems to me to set an extraordinarily low standard for good enough explanation—and not one that should cause naturalists to lose any sleep.)

The next 'form' of 'the argument from consciousness' that Moreland considers is 'a correct C-inductive argument [which] as a part of a cumulative case . . . contributes to a P-inductive theistic argument' (32). According to Moreland, 'assuming the presence of background knowledge' (32), taking 'T' for 'Theism is true,' 'C' for 'conscious properties are regularly correlated with physical features,' and 'N' for 'Naturalism is true,' Pr (T/C) is very nearly 1. On Moreland's account, (i) Pr (T) is 'much higher than many naturalists concede'; (ii) Pr (C/T) is 'highly probable (>>.5)'; and (iii) Pr (not-T) x Pr (C/not-T)—which is 'equivalent to Pr (N) x Pr (C/N)'—is 'highly improbable (<<.5).'

In defence of (i), Moreland claims that:

> [M]any naturalists are either ignorant of or simply disregard the explosion of literature in the last twenty-five years or so providing sophisticated and powerful justification for theism. And the face of Anglo-American philosophy has been transformed as a result. . . . This explosion of Christian philosophy includes fresh, highly sophisticated defences of theism … largely ignored by naturalist philosophers. (33)

However, even if it is granted that the literature to which Moreland adverts is sophisticated and fresh, we have been given no reason here to suppose that naturalists should revise up the value that they give to Pr (T): after all, the history of philosophy is replete with 'sophisticated and fresh' defences of claims to which we all now quite properly give utterly negligible credence. For what it's worth, my own view, borrowing a turn of words from Moreland, is that, even in the light of 'the explosion of Christian philosophy,' Pr (T) 'is so low that it approximates to zero'; I expect that other naturalists acquainted with the relevant literature of the last twenty-five years will say the same.

In defence of (ii), Moreland makes two claims: (a) that since 'mental properties are basic characteristics of the fundamental being that constitutes a theistic ontology … the theist has no pressing issue regarding the existence or exemplification of the mental' (33); and (b) 'a basic datum of persons is that they are communal beings who love to share in meaningful relationships with others and who desire to bring other persons into being' (33). This is not very impressive. On the one hand, there is a large literature on the conceptual problems that confront

the very idea of disembodied exemplification of the mental. (See, for example, Rundle (2004) and Fales (2010).) On the other hand, we all know people who are not interested in meaningful relationships with others and who have no desire at all to bring other people into being. I'm inclined to think that Pr (C/T) is inscrutable; at any rate, Moreland hasn't here given me any reason to suppose otherwise.

In defence of (iii), Moreland says:

> [I]t is almost impossible for advocates of a naturalist worldview to avoid admitting that these phenomena are explanatorily recalcitrant for them, and must be admitted as brute facts. . . . And this is to admit that Pr (C/N) is very, very low indeed. (34)

I don't understand the move that Moreland makes here. We are supposing that 'N' is the claim that naturalism is true, and 'C' is the claim that 'conscious properties are regularly correlated with physical features.' What is the relationship between C and N? A natural thought, given Moreland's characterisation, is that N entails that it is a brute fact whether C. But if N entails that it is a brute fact whether C, then it is not the case that Pr (C/N) is very, very low unless it is *also* the case that Pr (C) is very, very low. After all, N's entailing that it is a brute fact whether C surely ensures that N and C are probabilistically independent—and, in that case Pr (C/N) just is Pr (C). (Perhaps an example will help to fix ideas. Suppose that it is a brute fact, relative to all else that you know ('E'), whether Richmond won the AFL Grand Final in 1980 ('R'). Surely it would be a mistake for you to suppose that Pr (R/E) is very, very low! After all, you can know that two evenly matched teams contested the AFL Grand Final in 1980 and still have no idea which of the two teams that played was the winner.)

Moreland argues at length against the suggestion that Pr (C/N) is inscrutable. He claims (a) that theism and AC provide intellectual grounds for rejecting this move; (b) that naturalism provides intellectual pressure against brute, non-physical facts; (c) that brute regular correlation of conscious properties with physical properties is 'magic without a Magician'; and (d) that there is a strong defeasible modal intuition that it is impossible for consciousness to be brutely correlated with matter by way of natural physical processes. I think that Moreland's

arguments here are not persuasive. (a) Clearly, since AC is the argument under assessment, it is question-begging to suppose that it provides reasons for supposing that Pr (C/N) is not inscrutable; and, in any case, in my view that is at least equally good reason to suppose that Pr(C/T) is inscrutable. (b) I think that Euthyphro considerations establish that theists are committed to many domains of brute facts—modal, moral, mathematical, metaphysical, and so forth; in consequence, in the context of the debate between naturalist and theists, there is no absolute intellectual pressure against brute non-naturalistic facts. (c) Theists who suppose that it is not knowable *a priori* that God exists are committed to the idea that the existence of a God is necessary in a way that is opaque to our cognitive capacities (see, for example, O'Connor (2008); such theists have no in-principle objection to the suggestion that the correlation of conscious properties to physical properties is necessary in that same kind of way that is opaque to our cognitive capacities. (d) While some theists may have strong defeasible modal intuitions about the impossibility of brute correlations between consciousness and matter by way of natural physical processes, many naturalists have equally strong defeasible moral intuitions about the impossibility of a whole range of theistic assumptions—we don't need to start listing them before we see that there is no dialectical progress to be made on either side by appealing to such intuitions.

While there are more things to say about Moreland's treatment of this 'form' of 'the argument from consciousness,' I shall conclude with the following observation. Moreland's argument assumes that T iff ~N—'naturalism and theism are the only live options under consideration' (32). But, even granted this implausible assumption, Moreland fails to make a strong case for *any* of his key claims, viz: (i) that Pr (T) is 'much higher than many naturalists concede'; (ii) that Pr (C/T) is 'highly probable (>>.5)'; and (iii) that Pr (not-T) x Pr (C/not-T)—which is 'equivalent to Pr (N) x Pr (C/N)'—is 'highly improbable (<<.5).' Consequently, Moreland comes nowhere near establishing that Pr (T/C) is not very low, let alone establishing that Pr (T/C) is very close to 1.

The final 'form' of 'the argument from consciousness' that Moreland considers is set out as follows (a slightly different version of the argument is given in Moreland (2003: 206) :

1. Mental events are genuine non-physical mental entities that exist.
2. Specific mental event types are regularly correlated with specific physical event types.
3. There is an explanation for these correlations.
4. Personal explanation is different from natural scientific explanation.
5. The explanation for these correlations is either a personal explanation or natural scientific explanation.
6. The explanation is not a natural scientific one.
7. Therefore, the explanation is a personal one.
8. If the explanation is personal, then it is theistic.
9. Therefore, the explanation is theistic.

In Moreland's view, the key premises in the argument are 1, 3, and 6. The middle part of the book—in which he discusses the views of Searle, O'Connor, McGinn, Skrbina and Clayton—is intended to be an 'indirect' defence of the conjunction of 3 and 6 arrived at by the examination of 'naturalist accounts of the mental that, if successful, would defeat 3 and 6' (51). Clearly, Moreland's case in favour of the significance of 3 and 6 fails if there are plausible naturalist theories that escape the criticisms that Moreland levels against the views of Searle, O'Connor, McGinn, Skrbina and Clayton. I think that there are such theories. In particular, as noted above, I think that there are naturalist theories which claim that the correlation of conscious properties to physical properties is necessary in a way that is (currently) opaque to our cognitive capacities *in just the same way that* many theists suppose that the existence of God is necessary in a way that is (currently) opaque to our cognitive capacities. On such theories, there is an explanation for the correlations—they hold of metaphysical necessity, after all—and yet the explanation is plainly neither a natural scientific explanation nor a personal explanation. (Moreland makes various hyperbolic statements about naturalism that draw heavily on what he takes to be the implications of the claim that 'naturalism is a worldview that claims explanatory epistemic superiority to its rivals' (3). However, if theism and naturalism both have recourse to metaphysical necessities that are opaque to our cognitive capacities, the superiority of naturalism to theism can be maintained *on other grounds*.

For more on this point, see my previously mentioned contribution to Meister, Moreland and Sweis (eds.) (forthcoming).)

Moreland makes various different kinds of remarks about 1. At some points, he says that he simply assumes that it is true: the main claim for which he wants to argue is that naturalists should be 'strict physicalists' (and, by implication, the argument against 'strict physicalism' is another project for a different occasion) (38). However, he also says that 'certain issues are conspicuous by their absence in defences of strict physicalism or criticisms of property dualism' and that he 'wants to get these issues before the reader' (38). And sometimes he goes so far as to say, for example, that 'property/event and substance dualism are so obviously true that it is hard to see why there is so much contemporary hostility to dualism in its various incarnations' (175).

Considerations that Moreland takes to establish that mental states are in no sense physical states will be familiar to almost all readers of his book (38-9, italics in the original):

(a) There is a raw qualitative feel or a 'what it is like' to a mental state such as a pain.
(b) At least many mental states have intentionality—*ofness* or *aboutness*—directed towards an object.
(c) Mental states exhibit certain epistemic features—direct access, private access, first-person epistemic authority, expression in intentional contexts, self-reflexivity associated with 'I'—that could not be the case if they were physical.
(d) They require a subjective ontology—namely, mental states are necessarily owned by the first-person, unified, sentient subjects who have them.
(e) Mental states fail to have crucial features—e.g. spatial extension, location—that characterise physical states and, in general, cannot be described using physical language.
(f) Libertarian free acts exemplify active power and not passive liability.

I think that defenders of the claim that mental states are physical states have nothing to fear from (a)-(e). Some of what is claimed therein is true, but consistent with mind/brain identity; and the rest of what is claimed

therein is false. Of course, there has been intensive discussion of (a)-(e) by naturalists in the past few decades; for the purposes of the present review, I'm happy to follow Moreland's oft-repeated rhetorical ploy, and to urge people to look at *all* of the literature relevant to the assessment of these claims. (I can't help observing that it seems utterly obvious to me that mental states have spatial location—*my* mental states are, and have always been, where my body is. How could Moreland deny this?) On the other hand, (f) is just false—there is no such thing as libertarian freedom (though there is such a thing as compatibilist freedom, and, happily, that's freedom enough).

In short: I think that naturalists have a straightforward reply to Moreland's 'deductive form' of 'the argument from consciousness.' Either—as 'strong naturalists' suppose—the first premise of the argument is false; or else—as 'weak naturalists' can suppose—the fifth premise is mistaken. At the very least, it is clear that these premises are so controversial that they can do no useful work in arbitration of disputes between theists and naturalists.

II. SCIENCE AND STRONG PHYSICALISM

Moreland appears to use the terms 'physicalism' and 'naturalism' interchangeably. At p.ix, he characterises 'strong naturalism' as the view that 'all particulars, properties, relations, and laws are physical.' At p.19, he adds that 'strong naturalists' suppose that all particulars, properties, relations and laws are *microphysical*, or else 'constituted by' particulars, properties, relations and laws that are all (ultimately) microphysical. At p.4, he seems to suggest that 'strong naturalists' suppose that 'unqualified cognitive value resides in science and nothing else'—and, indeed, that 'strong naturalists' suppose that unqualified cognitive value resides in microphysics and nothing else. By way of contrast, at p.ix, he characterises 'weak naturalism' as the view that, along with physical particulars, properties, relations and laws, there are 'emergent' particulars, properties, relations and laws (where emergent particulars, properties, relations and laws are '*sui generis*, simple, intrinsically characterisable and new relative to base' (21)). Correspondingly, at p.4, he seems to suggest that 'weak naturalists' suppose that 'non-scientific fields are not worthless and

nor do they offer no intellectual results, but they are notably inferior to science in their epistemic standing and do not merit full credence.'

There is much to contest in this; I shall not canvass all of the relevant considerations here. First, there is an obvious distinction between 'strong naturalism' and 'strong physicalism.' This becomes clear if we think about the relationship that holds between physics and chemistry. Given Moreland's account of emergence—and, in particular, given his apparent assumption that anything beyond 'structural constitution' is emergent—it seems probable that he is committed to the claim that much of the chemical is emergent relative to the physical. But an eliminative materialist who held that the chemical is emergent relative to the physical could surely be a 'strong naturalist' while yet not counting as a 'strong physicalist.' (There is a quantum-mechanical explanation of the structure of the periodic table of elements. However, at least in practice, that explanation is not a 'deduction', and nor is it the case that it appeals to 'ordinary structural properties.') Second, and relatedly, it is clear that Moreland's account of emergence and 'level relationships' is hopelessly impressionistic. The British Emergentists were enormously impressed by the novelty of chemistry relative to physics: they rhapsodised about the astonishing emergence of the properties of water from the properties of hydrogen and oxygen. (For discussion of the history of British Emergentism, see, for example, McLaughlin 1997.) I think that it is very hard to give a precise account on which the 'emergence' of consciousness from matter is more mysterious or surprising than the 'emergence' of the properties of water from the properties of hydrogen and oxygen; at the very least, we are owed some further explanation of why it is that chemistry is not '*sui generis*, simple, intrinsically characterisable and new relative to [physics].' Third, and most importantly, Moreland's account of 'strong naturalism' and 'weak naturalism' runs together considerations that should be kept separate. It is one question whether a view endorses some kind of ontological or metaphysical reductionism; it is quite another question whether a view endorses what I might call 'base chauvinism,' i.e. epistemic privileging of investigations conducted at 'lower levels.' There is nothing in ontological or metaphysical reductionism that mandates contempt for the 'special sciences': on the contrary, ontological or metaphysical reductionists can suppose that the epistemic standing of the 'special sciences' is vastly superior to the epistemic standing of

the base sciences (because, say, the 'special sciences' are 'closer' to us, or because they matter more to us, or because their results are more certain because better confirmed).

In his Chapter Eight ('Science and Strong Physicalism'), Moreland argues for

The Autonomy Thesis: Among the central questions of philosophy that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another, most can in principle be answered by philosophical investigation and argument without relying substantively on the sciences.

His argument for the Autonomy Thesis has two parts. First, he selects 'almost at random, two paradigm case debates in philosophy-of-mind literature to serve as illustrations of the Autonomy Thesis' (162): Paul Churchland on semantic and epistemic issues (162-3), and Jaegwon Kim on type identity physicalism (163-6). Second, he responds to two counterarguments: that science makes dualism implausible (166-8); and that physicalism is the hard core of a scientific research program (169-74).

There are many contestable details in Moreland's argument for the Autonomy Thesis. I particularly like the following:

> Not all neuroscientists adopt physicalism as a research heuristic. For example . . . Jeffrey Schwartz is a leading researcher in obsessive-compulsive disorders. Schwartz explicitly employs a substance dualist view of the person, coupled with a libertarian account of freedom in his research and he claims that this heuristic has generated accurate predictions, provided explanations for various data, and lead to cures that could not have been found on the basis of a physicalist heuristic. Schwartz may be in the minority, but even if this is so, it is just a sociological fact about the community of neuroscientists, not a view about the necessary conditions for a scientifically appropriate heuristic for research programs. (169)

So, on the one hand, the fact that the scientific establishment overwhelmingly favours a 'physicalist heuristic' is a merely sociological observation that provides Moreland with no grounds for revising down the credence that he attributes to the claim that physicalism is a hard core scientific research program; but, on the other hand, the fact that there has been a surge in the number of conservative Christians apologists in philosophy departments in the United States producing books and papers in philosophy of religion is a not-merely sociological observation

that provides naturalists with good grounds for revising up their credence that theism is true!

However, the point that I most wish to emphasise is that Moreland's defence of the Autonomy Thesis depends crucially upon his conception of the project of philosophy of mind. On Moreland's account of the first-order and second-order organisation of the project of philosophy of mind, it seems to me that it *is* largely plausible to claim—as Moreland does—that 'philosophical issues are, with rare exceptions, autonomous from (and authoritative with respect to) the so-called deliverances of the hard sciences.' But it also seems to me that Moreland's account of the project of philosophy of mind hardly intersects at all with what I take to be the central features of that project.

Moreland provides the following characterisation of what he takes to be 'the central first-order topics in philosophy of mind' (158-9):

1. Ontological Questions: To what is a mental or physical property identical? To what is a mental or physical event identical? To what is the owner of mental properties/events identical? What is a human person? How are mental properties related to mental events? Are there essences . . . and, if so, what is the essence of a mental event or of a human person?
2. Epistemological Questions: How do we come to have knowledge or justified beliefs about other minds and about our own minds? Is there a proper epistemic order to first-person knowledge of one's own mind and third-person knowledge of other minds? How reliable is first-person introspection and what is its nature? If reliable, should first-person introspection be limited to providing knowledge about mental states or should it be extended to include knowledge about one's own ego?
3. Semantic Questions: What is a meaning? What is a linguistic entity and how it is related to a meaning? Is thought reducible to or a necessary condition for language use? How do the terms in our common-sense psychological vocabulary get their meaning? How are meaning and intentional objects 'in' the mind?

Moreland also provides the following characterisation of what he takes to be 'the central second-order topics in philosophy of mind' (159):

4. Methodological Questions: How should one proceed in analysing and resolving the first-order issues that constitute the philosophy of mind? What is the proper order between philosophy and science? Should we adopt some form of philosophical naturalism, set aside so-called first philosophy, and engage topics in philosophy of mind within a framework of our empirically best-attested theories relevant to those topics? What is the role of thought experiments in philosophy of mind and how does the 'first person point of view' factor into generating the materials for formulating those thought experiments?

These lists prompt me to think how dull and uninteresting philosophy of mind can become when the categories that it employs are not informed by current empirical investigation. Consider, for example, Moreland's 'epistemological questions.' There is a wealth of recent research on how we actually do form beliefs about the minds of other people—but it is research that is inaccessible to anyone who supposes that theory construction in this realm begins with introspection. (For a very early example of the kind of research that I have in mind here, see Meltzoff and Gopnik (1993).) Moreover, questions about how we form beliefs about the minds of other people are only one small part of a much wider set of questions, concerning perception, cognition, emotion, behaviour, mental dysfunction, and relationships between these and other elements, that I take to be the living heart of philosophy of mind.

While I cannot argue the case here, it seems to me that Moreland's Autonomy Thesis gets things almost entirely backwards. The truth is much closer to this: Among the interesting philosophical questions that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another, there are very few that can be answered by philosophical investigation and argument that does not rely substantively on the sciences. In particular, almost all of the interesting work that is now being done in philosophy of mind is at least informed by recent experimental work in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, social psychology, and other fields of scientific endeavour.

III. AC, DUALISM AND THE FEAR OF GOD

In the final chapter of the book, Moreland claims to 'identify and clarify a psychological, sociological and spiritual phenomenon, viz. the fear of God, which I believe explains the reactionary attitude towards, loathing of, and widespread rejection of dualism' (176). In particular, Moreland identifies 'three lines of evidence' that he takes to support the claim that 'fear of God sustains strong naturalism': (i) 'the low quality of argumentation when it comes to evaluating substance dualism (or theism) when it is related to philosophy of mind' (179); (ii) the fact that 'physicalists do not interact with leading dualists, particularly substance dualists, in their writing, endnotes, or bibliographies' (186); and (iii) the fact that 'there are various rhetorical devices used to dismiss dualism, AC or theism that are not worthy of those who employ them' (186). I shall focus primarily on what Moreland says on behalf of (i); but I begin with a few comments on (ii) and (iii).

I think that it is simply false that physicalists 'do not interact' with the work of 'leading dualists . . . Robert Adams, George Bealer, Francis Beckwith, Mark Bedau, Roderick Chisholm, John Foster, Stewart Goetz, W. D. Hart, William Hasker, Brian Leftow, Geoffrey Maddell, Paul Moser, Alvin Plantinga, Howard Robinson, Jeffrey Schwartz, Eleonore Stump, Richard Swinburne, Charles Taliaferro, Dallas Willard and Dean Zimmerman' (186). From Churchland (1985) to Jackson (2001), there is actually a strong record of philosophical engagement by physicalists with new and interesting defences of dualism, idealism, and so forth. (Perhaps it is worth noting, in passing, that Moreland would do well to read Churchland (1985): 'Recent psychological and neurological research indicates that what we innocently gloss as "consciousness" actually divides into a considerable variety of types and grades of internal apprehension, which have different targets, employ different media of representation, show different degrees of trustworthiness, and exploit different subsystems of the brain (for a summary of some recent results, see Churchland (1983)).' Nearly thirty years on, the indicative research has grown like Topsy.) If there has been less of this kind of engagement in the past ten years, that would likely be because the production of interesting new defences of dualism has tailed off a bit. (For some evidence that this has been the case, see, for example, the bibliography in

Robinson (2007). Indeed, Moreland's own bibliography mentions only one work by those singled out by name in the above quote that postdates Foster (2000): Schwartz and Begley (2002)!)

Moreland's complaint that physicalists 'use various rhetorical devices to dismiss dualism' will, I think, resonate with many physicalists. Consider, for example: 'It is hard to see how one would argue for theism in general, or substance dualism and AC in particular with someone whose views are as indefeasible as Searle's. When statements like these are made, there is usually something more happening than mere intellectual viewpoints, and the cosmic authority problem is a good candidate for that something more' (190). With only a little editing: 'It is hard to see how one would argue for naturalism in general, or micro-physicalism in particular, with someone whose views are as indefeasible as Moreland's (Plantinga's, Craig's, insert-name-of-own-choice). When statements like these are made, there is usually something more happening than mere intellectual viewpoints, and the God delusion (fear of death, inability to tolerate disagreement, insert-psychopathology-of-own-choice) is a good candidate for that something more.' No doubt I will not be the only reader of Moreland's book who is inclined to think that his appeal to 'fear of God' is a merely rhetorical device that is unworthy of its author (or, at least, so one should hope).

Moreland offers five 'major' arguments for substance dualism (including three 'variants' of the first 'major' argument, of which I shall present only the first here):

Argument One
1. I am an unextended centre of consciousness (justified by introspection).
2. No physical object is an unextended centre of consciousness.
3. (Therefore) I am not a physical object.
4. Either I am a physical object or an immaterial substance.
5. (Therefore) I am an immaterial substance.

Argument Two
1. Personal identity at and through time is primitive and absolute. (Talk about persons is not analysable into talk about connected mental lives.)

2. (Therefore) Substance dualism is true. (From 1, by inference to the best explanation.)

Argument Three
1. Statements using the first-person indexical 'I' express facts about persons that cannot be expressed in statements without the first-person indexical.
2. If I am a physical object, then all the facts about me can be expressed in statements without the first-person indexical.
3. (Therefore) I am not a physical object.
4. The facts mentioned in (1) are best explained by substance dualism.

Argument Four
1. If human beings exercise libertarian agency, then (i) they have the power to initiate change as a first mover; (ii) they have the power to refrain from exercising their power to initiate change; and (iii) they act for the sake of reasons as irreducible, teleological ends for the sake of which they act.
2. Human beings exercise libertarian agency.
3. No merely material object can exercise libertarian agency.
4. (Therefore) Human beings are not material objects.
5. Human beings are either material objects or immaterial substances.
6. (Therefore) They are immaterial substances.

Argument Five
1. The law of identity: If x is identical to y, then whatever is true of x is true of y, and vice versa.
2. I can strongly conceive of myself as existing disembodied or, indeed, without any physical particular existing.
3. If I can strongly conceive of some state of affairs S that S possibly obtains, then I have good grounds for believing of S that S is possible.
4. (Therefore) I have good grounds for believing of myself that it is possible for me to exist and be disembodied.

5. If some entity x is such that it is possible for x to exist without y, then (i) x is not identical with y and (ii) y is not essential to x.
6. My physical body is not such that it is possible to exist disembodied or without any physical particular existing.
7. (Therefore) I have good grounds for believing of myself that I am not identical to a physical particular, including my physical body and that no physical particular, including my physical body, is essential to me.

There are key premises in each of these arguments that have been much discussed in the recent literature—particularly by physicalists and other naturalists—that I take to be simply false. I deny that I am an *unextended* centre of consciousness; I am certain that this claim is not justified by 'introspection'. I deny that personal identity through time is primitive and absolute; I also deny that, if personal identity through time were primitive and absolute, that this fact would lend support to substance dualism. I deny that the phenomenon of the essential indexical is evidence against physicalism. I deny that human beings have libertarian agency, though I insist that they do have compatibilist agency. And I deny that the alleged 'strong conceivability' of my disembodied existence is good grounds for supposing that my disembodied existence is possible. (I also deny that the alleged 'strong conceivability' of zombies is evidence that zombies are possible.) Of course, *all* of the claims that I have just made have been exhaustively discussed—and defended—by many physicalists and naturalists in the philosophy of mind literature over the past thirty years. I do not mean to add to that discussion and defence; the point upon which I want to insist here is that Moreland's claims about 'the low quality of argumentation' provided by physicalists and naturalists in connection with these particular claims is obviously false. Moreover, I note that, if this is right, then it follows immediately that Moreland's claims about 'the low quality of argumentation' provided by physicalists and naturalists in connection with the five arguments that he set out is also obviously false. Finally, I note that, if this is also right, then—granting Moreland his own claim that these five are *the* major arguments for substance dualism—it also follows immediately that Moreland's claims about 'the low quality of argumentation' provided by physicalists and naturalists in connection with substance dualism are also obviously false.

Moreland further claims to be able to 'turn the fear of God into an argument [for theism].' Here is what he says:

> Atheists fit a tighter control group than theists in that the class of atheists are more homogenous, viz. there is a strong, if not universal trait among atheists according to which they have had their difficulties with their father figure—he was harsh, stern and critical, or he was passive and embarrassing. . . . By contrast, theism is the ordinary response of the human person to creation; it does not need to be taught to people (though culture can influence the direction it takes) but atheism does. Moreover, the class of theists is so diverse that no single factor can be identified that unifies that class. . . . Thus, I can identify . . . the faculty distorter that causes atheists to fail to see the evidence clearly and adequately appreciate its force. . . . The same thing is going on with respect to dualism and AC. (191; with some slight grammatical modifications).

As evidence for his primary claim, Moreland cites only Vitz (1999) (though he does also mention, for comparison, Beit-Hallahmi (2007)). Vitz's book is terrible, in much the same kind of way that Johnson (1988) is terrible, albeit with a more explicit argument. Nietzsche, Hume, Russell, Sartre, Camus and Schopenhauer all had fathers who died when they were very young; Hobbes, Meslier, Voltaire, d'Alambert, d'Holbach, Feuerbach, Butler, Freud and Wells all had fathers who were weak and/or abusive. Pascal, Berkeley, Butler, Reid, Burke, Mendelssohn, Paley, Wilberforce, de Chateaubriand, Schleiermacher, Newman, Tocqueville, Kierkegaard, von Hügel, Chesterton, Schweitzer, Buber, Bonhoeffer and Heschel all had strong fathers. So what? Cherry-picked examples—even if properly described—tell you nothing at all about correlations in populations at large. Here are some more people whose fathers died when they were very young: Moses, Mohammad, Saint Nicholas, Isaac Newton, Gottfried Leibniz, Robert Baden-Powell, and Nelson Mandela. Here are some people who had strong fathers: John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, Ambrose Bierce, Albert Einstein, and David Lewis. Proceeding in this way can teach us nothing. Moreover—and perhaps more importantly—there is a mountain of empirical research that weighs against the hypothesis that Vitz defends. On the one hand, countless studies and meta-studies bear out the claim that, on average, atheists are more intelligent and better educated than theists: atheists are

over-represented in the upper reaches of the American academy, and under-represented in the nation's jails (see, for example, Nyborg (2008)). On the other hand, cross-national census data suggests that there are positive correlations, on a range of measures, between higher levels of religiosity and increased levels of societal dysfunction (see, for example, Paul (2005)). While the correct explanation of the mountain of data is not obvious, this much seems clear: it is not even *prima facie* plausible to suppose that there is a positive correlation between having your father die when you are young—or having a weak and abusive father—and having improved educational and societal outcomes. (Beit-Hallahmi concludes: atheists are 'less authoritarian and suggestible, less dogmatic, *less prejudiced*, more tolerant of others, law-abiding, compassionate, conscientious and well-educated' (my italics)!)

Moreland's claim to 'clarify' the 'phenomenon . . . of fear of God' deserves some further comment. As far as I can see, Moreland says nothing at all about what 'fear of God' might be, or about how it might be psychologically realised. It seems to me to be most plausible to suppose that the reason why so many contemporary physicalists and naturalists pay no attention to contemporary developments in philosophy of religion is because those physicalists and naturalists are neither anxious nor uncomfortable about their own views. Surely it requires a *very* powerful story to make it plausible that those who deny that there are Xs are afraid of Xs, or that those who deny that S exists are afraid of S. Do those who deny that there are vampires—or ghosts, or alien abductors, or leprechauns, or monsters under the bed—evince fear of these things? If not, why are matters any different for those who deny that there are gods (or God)? (Indeed, mightn't one suspect that those who harp on about 'fear of God' protest too much: isn't it at least as plausible to suppose that they are evincing anxiety and insecurity about their own beliefs?)

Pataki (2007) argues that, for the majority of religious people, their religiosity is founded in something like mental illness or infantilism: almost all religion is a disease born of fear and a source of untold misery. I think that Moreland and Vitz would do well to read Pataki's book carefully, attending to the way that they *feel* as they read it. Then they should think again about the implications of their *saying* that it is pretty plausible to suppose that all atheists have fathers who were weak and/or abusive and/or entirely absent. (Moreland: '. . . there is a strong, *if not*

universal trait among atheists . . .' (191, my italics).) It should go without saying that this is extraordinarily offensive to those atheists—myself included—who have, or had, very strong fathers.

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OPPY ON THE ARGUMENT FROM CONSCIOUSNESS:
A REJOINDER

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Graham Oppy is not persuaded by my argument for God from consciousness (hereafter, AC) (Moreland 2008; cf. Moreland 2009a, 2009b; Oppy 2011). This is hardly surprising, coming from a man who, upon assessing the impact of the explosion of sophisticated literature in defense of theism over the past twenty-five years, claims that the probability of theism is still so low as to approximate zero (Oppy: p. 195)! Oppy raises dozens of points against my views, and I cannot respond to all of them here. Instead, I shall limit my remarks to those I take to be central to the issues relevant to my main thesis. Accordingly, I shall respond to his criticisms of my presentation of three forms of AC, and interact with his claims about theism, consciousness and emergent chemical properties.

I. THREE FORMS OF AC

Oppy opines that we cannot argue from regular correlations of mental and physical states to theism by way of an inference to the best explanation. He supports this claim in two ways. First, to warrant such an inference, we need to factor in other theoretical virtues (e.g., the ontological, ideological and other costs of theistic explanation) and an assessment of how well theistic explanation comports with other well-established theories. Second, he says it is not clear just how theism does explain these correlations. He illustrates this problem with a thought experiment in which European explorers come to Australia, find the locals in possession of advanced mathematical knowledge, and in an attempt to explain this possession, rest content with the following: "It is hardly surprising that

these abilities should exist in finite consciousness, since they already exist in an unembodied mind, viz. God" (Oppy: p. 194).

I have three responses to Oppy's first argument. First, it is just not true that successful inferences to the best explanation (IBEs) must have access to all the information he mentions before such an inference is warranted. If such were required, successful inferences to the best explanation could hardly ever be made because access to all, or even most, of such factors is seldom available. Instead, IBEs are often based on basic intuitions, e.g., tacit knowledge, of the relative fittingness/informativeness of two or more rival hypotheses and explanatory data. Attempts to formalize the psychology of discovery or the epistemology of justification here have failed, yet IBEs are successfully done all the time. Oppy's requirements are far too skeptical. Moreover, just because his intuitions about the theistic hypothesis and IBE are negative, it does not follow that they ought to be such or that others will not draw a different conclusion. Indeed, one of the key factors in leading Anthony Flew from atheism to theism was precisely the inductive evidence, most likely in the form of an IBE, regarding finite consciousness and relevant facts concerning it (Flew 2007: pp. 124-32, 161-65, 173-83). I believe that as AC gets more widely discussed, Oppy's form of extreme skepticism will not be prevalent, though I could be mistaken here.

Second, according to the leading expert on IBE—Peter Lipton— when specific virtues—e.g., scope, unification, simplicity, treatment of contrastive "why" questions—*are* employed to assess an IBE, they are directly relevant to the loveliness of the hypothesis (its ability to facilitate understanding of why the data obtain and remove our puzzlement about them), and not its overall likelihood (Lipton 2000). By contrast, the specific virtues listed by Oppy seem relevant to overall likelihood, not loveliness with respect to data alone, and, thus, they are most likely irrelevant to cases of IBE. This leads to my third point.

Oppy seems to confuse factors relevant to IBE with those relevant to an overall assessment of the worth of a hypothesis. It could easily be the case that one could offer a successful IBE for a hypothesis relative to a specific range of facts, while that same hypothesis was judged ultimately inadequate in light of all the factors relevant to its assessment. My project was the former, not the latter, and so even if theism is judged inferior to

naturalism in light of all the relevant considerations Oppy proffers, AC could still be a successful IBE.

What about Oppy's second argument regarding the lack of clarity of theistic explanation of mental/physical correlations? In my book I develop two points relevant to theistic explanation in this regard. For one thing, on theism, the basic being exemplifies mental properties, so the theist does not have the problem of getting something from nothing (the exemplification of mental properties from the mere rearrangement of brute matter). If, in the beginning were the particles, you have a problem with the appearance of the mental in the first place, a problem that numerous naturalists acknowledge. The theist is in no such pickle here. Second, I develop the details of personal explanation, and claim that it is within the motives, intentions, and causal powers of God to bring about mental states and their regular correlation with brain states.

Remember, it is not a central part of personal explanation, as opposed to, say, causal explanation in the hard sciences, to answer a "how" question regarding the means by which an agent brings about an end, especially when the agent's act was a basic one, as the theist will claim regarding God's action in creating and sustaining mental facts and associated correlations. Personal explanation follows its own inner logic, and it can hardly be faulted for being unclear by employing standards suitable to alternative models of explanation.

I have two things to say regarding Oppy's thought experiment. First, his claim that it is a weak explanation to appeal to God's faculties to explain, say, the existence of finite, e.g., mathematical abilities, is wrong. I cannot develop the point, but Thomas Nagel has acknowledged the problem here for the atheist, along with the availability of a theistic explanation of human reasoning abilities (Nagel 1997: pp. 128-33). Victor Reppert (Reppert 2009) and Alvin Plantinga (Plantinga 1993) have developed detailed defenses of this argument. Those defenses are hardly examples of a "low standard of good enough explanation."

Second, Oppy confuses an explanation of the precise direction taken by a culture with regard to *developed* mental abilities (which would appeal to the history, practices, etc. of the people in question), given that basic abilities exist, with an explanation of how *basic* mental states and correlations could exist in the first place. AC involves the latter and his thought experiment is simply irrelevant to that project.

Oppy moves to a criticism of my C-inductive Bayesian version of AC. I shall briefly respond to his specific criticisms, and then step back and say what I believe is the key issue in this form of the argument.

Regarding the prior probability of theism relative to consciousness (Pr(T)), I claim that it is higher than many naturalists think, and support my claim by citing the explosive growth for twenty-five years of sophisticated defenses of theism of which many naturalists are unaware (I agree here with naturalist Quentin Smith; see Smith 2001). Oppy retorts that the history of philosophy is replete with sophisticated defenses of claims to which we now give little credence and, moreover, even in light of this literature, Pr(T) approximates zero.

I think Oppy's remarks are uncharitable and unconvincing. Obviously, in a book with a specific focus on AC, I could not undertake to provide a thorough-going defense of theism. Instead, I cite the presence of a vast amount of relevant recent literature with which many naturalists are unfamiliar. I certainly don't believe the mere existence of this literature establishes the truth of theism, and it is uncharitable to think otherwise. But it hardly follows that the plausibility of a viewpoint is not related to the volume and quality of defenses of that viewpoint. Think of what the epistemic situation would be if no one were defending theism and contrast that situation with the actual state of play. Surely the latter adds some support to theism. Moreover, my main point was that many naturalists working in the philosophy of mind (Oppy notwithstanding) take dismissive attitudes towards theism as though there were no sophisticated defenses of it. The widespread presence of such defenses makes such an attitude intellectually irresponsible, and that was, and is, my central point.

Regarding the probability of finite consciousness given theism (Pr(C/T)), I claim that (1) consciousness is exemplified by the basic entity, given theism, so there is no problem with giving an account of where conscious properties could come from so as to be available for subsequent exemplification, and (2) qua person, God would have reasons to create other conscious beings because persons are communal in nature and love to create other persons. Oppy replies that there are serious conceptual problems with the very idea of a disembodied mind and, moreover, "we all know people who are not interested in meaningful relationships with others and who have no desire at all to bring other people into being" (Oppy: p. 196).

The first claim strikes me as incredible. To make one point here, there is a vast and, in my view, convincing literature that disembodied existence is actual in near death experiences (See Long 2010). But what seems beyond reasonable doubt is that the vast majority of people, including educated people, rightly take these accounts as coherent and possibly true. Based on strong conceivability, from the first-person perspective, there is no problem with the possibility of me continuing to exist with such a perspective without a body.

It is hard to take the second claim seriously. For one thing, it is surely more natural and probable that a person will want meaningful relationships (and children) than not; thus, upon meeting a new person, one is *prima facie* justified in thinking these will be true of the person in question, unless an overriding defeater is discovered, and the same epistemic situation obtains in contemplating a possible person, including God. Further, if we note that the person in question is loving and generous, as is the case with God on the biblical conception, then it would be even more likely that such a person would desire meaningful relationships with others and to bring others into existence.

Next, Oppy responds to my following point: "[I]t is almost impossible for advocates of a naturalistic worldview to avoid admitting that these phenomena are explanatorily recalcitrant for them, and must be admitted as brute facts . . . And this is to admit that Pr(C/N) is very, very low indeed (Moreland: p. 34)." Here is Oppy's response:

"We are supposing that 'N' is the claim that naturalism is true, and 'C' is the claim that 'conscious properties are regularly correlated with physical features'. What is the relationship between C and N? A natural thought, given Moreland's characterization, is that N entails that it is a brute fact whether C. But if N entails that it is a brute fact whether C, then it is not the case that Pr(C/N) is very, very low unless it is *also* the case that Pr(C) is very, very low. After all, N's entailing that it is a brute fact whether C surely ensures that N and C are probabilistically independent. . . (Oppy: p. 196)."

In the broader context of my book, I think that my cited paragraph above is clear, but I admit that there is an ambiguity in my meaning if the paragraph is taken on its own, and I am happy to have the chance to clarify my point here. Oppy seems to be criticizing my claim that because N has no explanatory power with respect to C, then Pr (C/N)

is very low. Now Oppy is correct to point out that two propositions can be explanatorily independent without being improbable with respect to each other. However, key to Oppy's criticism is his claim that "N's entailing that it is a brute fact whether C surely ensures that N and C are probabilistically independent. . ." It would follow from this that it makes not the slightest difference to our expectation of C whether N is true or false, and throughout my book, I make clear that this is not my view.

In my book, I actually deny that N entails that C is a brute fact. Instead, I claim that for various reasons (e.g., N provides absolutely no resources for predicting or explaining C), Pr (C/N) approximates zero. Thus, N strongly suggests that C does not exist, and a reductive or eliminative strategy will be employed to support this claim. Thus, the probabilities of C and N are not independent. In the isolated paragraph above, by saying that naturalism must acknowledge mental phenomena as brute facts, I meant to underscore their bruteness—their utter inexplicability and, therefore, (likely) non-existence—not their factuality, though I admit my meaning was not clear.

In my book, I provide a number of reasons to think that naturalists should deny the existence of irreducible consciousness. I am far from alone in this judgment. In fact, many—indeed, most—naturalist philosophers of mind have been strict physicalists. On the eve of the demise of logical positivism and the analytical behaviorism it funded, one of the fathers of the resulting stream of physicalism, J. J. C. Smart, paradigmatically noted: "It seems to me that science is increasingly giving us a viewpoint whereby organisms are able to be seen as physicochemical mechanisms. . . . There does seem to be, so far as science is concerned, nothing in the world but increasingly complex arrangements of physical constituents. All except for one place: in consciousness . . . I just cannot believe that this can be so. That everything should be explicable in terms of physics . . . except the occurrence of sensations seems to me to be frankly unbelieveable" (Smart 1959: p. 61).

At this point, I want to step back from analyzing Oppy's specific criticisms and make a general point about the central issue in a Bayesian form of AC. Recall that in the early days of emergentism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, emergent properties were characterized epistemically, viz., as those which were unpredictable, even from a God's-

eye perspective, from a complete knowledge of the subvenient base. That subvenient base provided no explanatory or predictive grounds for emergent properties precisely as emergent entities. Now it makes no difference for the relevance of this point that today we construe emergent properties ontologically and not epistemically. Even on the ontological construal, emergent properties are completely *sui generis* relative to the entities and processes at the subvenient base. In this regard, the following characterization by Timothy O'Connor and Hong Yu Wong (2005: pp. 665-6) may be taken as canonical:

> An emergent property of type E will appear only in physical systems achieving some specific threshold of organized complexity. From an empirical point of view, this threshold will be arbitrary, one that would not be anticipated by a theorist whose understanding of the world was derived from theories developed entirely from observations of physical systems below the requisite complexity. In optimal circumstances, such a theorist would come to recognize the locally determinative interactive dispositions of basic physical entities. Hidden from his view, however, would be the tendency . . . to generate an emergent state.

For these reasons, $P(C/N\&k)$ (where k is background knowledge) is so low as to approximate zero. In my book I show why it is question-begging and *ad hoc* for someone simply to label the existence of mental states (or their correlations with physical states) as a basic, naturalistic fact in need of no explanation.

Now consider the following:

$$\frac{P(T/C\&k)}{P(N/C\&k)} = \frac{P(T)}{P(N)} \times \frac{P(C/T\&k)}{P(C/N\&k)}$$

The key probability for AC is not the prior probability of theism (and, I assume, the ratio of which it is a part). A low prior probability of theism does not by itself undercut AC. Even if that probability is low, it could be offset by an extremely low $P(C/N\&k)$ which would, in turn, make the key ratio be $P(C/T\&k)$ over $P(C/N\&k)$. And that is what an advocate of AC should argue, for even if $P(T)$ and $P(C/T\&k)$ are somewhat low, the really low factor is $P(C/T\&k)$ which, as I said above, approximates zero. And it is this probability that is crucial to the Bayesian version of AC.

Finally, Oppy criticizes premises (1) and (5) of the deductive form of AC:

(1) Mental events are genuine non-physical mental entities that exist. (5) The explanation for these correlations (between mental/physical state types) is either a personal explanation or a natural scientific explanation.

Taking these in reverse order, Oppy argues against (5) that the options are not exhaustive. Accordingly, he suggests that there are naturalist theories, currently opaque to our cognitive capacities, which will say that the correlation of physical properties to mental properties is metaphysically necessary and such theories are neither natural scientific nor personal.

Oppy does not specify which theories he has in mind, but given his general contours, I think that the views of Timothy O'Connor represent the best specification of what Oppy has in mind. Briefly, there are two aspects to O'Connor's view. First, the causal powers of properties are essential aspects of those properties and, thus, belong to properties with an absolute, metaphysical necessity. The causal potentialities of a property are part of what constitutes the property's identity (O'Connor 2000: pp. 70-71, 117-118). It is in this sense, that in the right circumstances, a subvenient property necessitates an emergent property. By way of application, properties constitutive of consciousness are emergent in this sense (O'Connor 2000: pp. 115-123). Second, according to O'Connor, if an emergent property is depicted in such a way as to be contingently linked to the base properties causing it to emerge, then apart from an appeal to God's contingent choice that things be so and to God's stable intention that they continue to be so, there will be no explanation for the link itself or its constancy (O'Connor 2000: pp. 70-71).

With this in mind, I have two responses to Oppy's argument. First, I think it confuses an efficient causal explanation for the fact that some phenomenon obtains with an ontological analysis of emergence that does not remove the need for the former. Even if we grant some necessitation account such as O'Connor's, we are still left without an explanation as to why the causal underpinnings of emergent mental properties obtained as opposed to alternative physical conditions. And, it could be argued, the two rivals for explaining this fact would be a natural scientific and a personal one. To put the point differently, an emergent necessitation

account will, in some sense, "explain" why an emergent property obtains by analyzing it as being necessitated by its subvenient base. But that does not explain why the base itself obtained. So the necessitation account does not, by itself, justify setting aside the dilemma of efficient causal explanation between natural scientific and personal explanation.

Second, in spite of what Oppy claims, the connection between mental and physical properties is contingent and not metaphysically necessary. Jaegwon Kim has provided an analysis of the dialectical situation we have reached (Kim 2006: pp. 229-33). According to Kim, while not conclusive, a very substantial case can be raised against the emergent necessitation view based on widely shared, plausible, commonsense intuitions that do not depend epistemically on a prior commitment to dualism. By contrast, Kim says that the only considerations in favor of emergent necessitation might very well be accused of begging the question because they all seem to depend upon a prior commitment to physicalism. I leave to the reader to ponder this stage of the dialectic, but I believe that, given contingency, O'Connor's remark about the need for theistic explanation here is right on target.

Regarding (1), I have little to say. I refer the reader to his rebuttal of my brief case for property/event dualism. I found it significantly wanting. Further, one major goal of my book was to supply intellectual pressure for naturalists to deny (1) and embrace strict physicalism. For some, this will be a small price to pay. For what I believe will be a growing number of others, such a denial is too steep a price to pay, and it will favourably be seen as fodder for a *reductio* against naturalism.

II. GOD, CONSCIOUSNESS AND CHEMICAL EMERGENCE

Oppy seems to think that my account of emergent properties ("given his apparent assumption that anything beyond 'structural constitution' is emergent") makes it likely that I am committed to chemical emergence relative to physics, and, given this, he asks why I do not consider chemical emergence, every bit as much as consciousness, a problem in need of a theistic explanation. Says Oppy, "I think that it is very hard to give a precise account on which the 'emergence' of consciousness from matter is more mysterious or surprising than the 'emergence' of the properties of

water from the properties of hydrogen and oxygen; at the very least, we are owed some further explanation of why it is that chemistry is not '*sui generis*, simple, intrinsically characterisable and new relative to [physics] (Oppy: p. 201)."

I offer three responses to Oppy's remarks. First, he does not give us an example of chemical emergence and I am skeptical that there are such. While I am open to counter examples, I think all chemical properties are either additive sums of features at the micro-physical level or else structurally supervenient on micro-physics.

Second, let's grant that there are chemically emergent properties. By their very nature, emergent properties are utterly novel, unpredictable and inexplicable in light of their subvenient base, and as a result, there are no grounds whatsoever for claiming that emergent properties are somehow necessitated by their bases. To be sure, we rightly have a Humean habit of expecting constant conjunction here based on past experience, but constant conjunction with respect to emergent and subvenient properties provides no grounds for thinking the former are necessitated by the latter. However, we do have grounds in the form of widespread, commonsense intuitions that the connection between emergent properties and their subvenient bases is contingent. I have already pointed this out with respect to mental properties, and since we do not have before us clear examples of chemical emergence, let us consider secondary qualities and, for the purposes of illustration, construe them as mind-independent, irreducible, emergent properties. In this case, it is quite easy, based on (defeasible) strong conceivability, to generate thought experiments in which an inversion of secondary qualities obtains. We are, then, *prima facie* justified in believing such states of affairs are metaphysically possible. Now recall Timothy O'Connor's remark that if an emergent property is depicted in such a way as to be contingently linked to the base properties causing it to emerge, then apart from an appeal to God's contingent choice that things be so and to God's stable intention that they continue to be so, there will be no explanation for the link itself or its constancy. In this way, contrary to Oppy, I see no reason why a theistic argument from chemical emergence (if such there be) could not be plausibly advanced.

Third, let us grant for the sake of argument that a theistic argument from chemical emergence is not plausible. Oppy challenges me to provide an account of why conscious emergence, but not chemical emergence,

provides the basis of a theistic argument. To answer this, we need to step back a minute and consider the impact of the presence of a rival hypothesis on the evaluation of a hypothesis in question. An important factor in theory acceptance—scientific or otherwise—is whether or not a specific paradigm has a rival. If not, then certain epistemic activities, e. g., labelling some phenomenon as basic for which only a description and not an explanation is needed, may be quite adequate not to impede the theory in question. But the adequacy of those same activities can change dramatically if a sufficient rival position is present.

The types of entities postulated, along with the sorts of properties they possess and the relations they enter should be at home with other entities in the theory, and, in this sense, be natural for the theory. Some entity (particular thing, process, property, or relation) e is natural for a theory T just in case either e is a central, core entity of T or e bears a relevant similarity to central, core entities in e's category within T. If e is in a category such as substance, force, property, event, relation, or cause, e should bear a relevant similarity to other entities of T in that category. This is a formal definition and the material content given to it will depend on the theory in question.

Moreover, given rivals R and S, the postulation of e in R is *ad hoc* and question-begging against advocates of S if e bears a relevant similarity to the appropriate entities in S, and in this sense is "at home" in S, but fails to bear this relevant similarity to the appropriate entities in R. The notion of "being *ad hoc*" is notoriously difficult to specify precisely. It is usually characterized as an intellectually inappropriate adjustment of a theory whose sole epistemic justification is to save the theory from falsification. Such an adjustment involves adding a new supposition to a theory not already implied by its other features. In the context of evaluating rivals R and S, the principle just mentioned provides a sufficient condition for the postulation of e to be *ad hoc* and question-begging.

The issue of naturalness is relevant to theory assessment between rivals in that it provides a criterion for advocates of a theory to claim that their rivals have begged the question against them or adjusted their theory in an inappropriate, *ad hoc* way. And though this need not be the case, naturalness can be related to basicality in this way: Naturalness can provide a means of deciding the relative merits of accepting theory R, which depicts phenomenon e as basic, vs. embracing S, which takes

e to be explainable in more basic terms. If e is natural in S but not in R, it will be difficult for advocates of R to justify the bald assertion that e is basic in R and that all proponents of R need to do is describe e and correlate it with other phenomena in R as opposed to explaining e. Such a claim by advocates of R will be even more problematic if S provides an explanation for e.

Now conscious properties are basic for theism in a way that (alleged) emergent chemical properties are not in that the former and not the latter characterize the fundamental, core entity in a theistic paradigm. There is no need for a theist to account for the origin of consciousness *per se* since he takes consciousness to be basic. And the fact that consciousness appears in world history, is at home given theism in a way that chemical properties are not. This is why there are additional grounds for using the former in a theistic argument that fail to be present regarding the explanation of chemical emergent properties.

III. CONCLUSION

As I mentioned in the introduction, it is hardly surprising that Oppy is not persuaded by my presentation of AC, since he seems to be a hard person to persuade in general. The explosion of literature on behalf of theism in the last few decades has not moved him to consider Pr(T) as much higher than zero. He flatly states in his review that "there is no such thing as libertarian freedom (Oppy: p. 200)"; he does not say that, on balance, compatibilism is to be preferred to libertarianism or that libertarianism is less plausible than compatibilism. Apparently, all the defenses of libertarian freedom have had little impact on his assessment of libertarianism.

I believe others will be more open to AC, especially those naturalists who acknowledge there is a serious problem here for naturalism. I have in mind those thinkers like Jaegwon Kim who (1) are sensitive to the hard problem of consciousness and, relatedly, to emergentist questions (e.g., Why does pain instead of pleasure or no conscious property at all correlate with C fiber firing?) (Kim 2006: pp. 220-36, 282-305.), (2) accept certain emergent mental properties (those of phenomenal consciousness for Kim), and (3) recognize the limits of naturalistic explanation. Regarding

(3), Kim observes that "if a whole system of phenomena that are prima facie not among basic physical phenomena resists physical explanation, and especially if we don't even know where or how to begin, it would be time to reexamine one's physicalist commitments (Kim 1998: p. 96.)" For Kim, genuinely non-physical mental entities are the paradigm case of such a system of phenomena. And in this context, to abandon physicalist commitments is to abandon naturalist ones, or so I argue in my book.

I have tried to respond to what I take are the crucial criticisms Oppy advances against my thesis. There are many criticisms he raises that I have not addressed. But life is short this side of the grave, and space is limited, so I must rest content with where things stand. I am honored to have someone of Oppy's stature criticize my work, even though I cannot follow him in his views.[1]

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ON THE PUZZLE OF PETITIONARY PRAYER
Response to Daniel and Frances Howard-Snyder

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1. As I have indicated elsewhere, I am skeptical about petitionary prayer. Among traditional theistic scriptures, the Christian ones say the most about petitionary prayers, but it seems to me that even those scriptures do not imply that God will answer any of my prayers. I also suspect that God's freedom and goodness make it impossible for God's actions to count as answers to petitionary prayers. Finally, I don't think we can know whether God has answered particular prayers, and I don't know what to ask for.[1]

By contrast, the Howard-Snyders defend the rationality of the practice of petitionary prayer through a series of clever and thoughtful arguments. They say that God has good reasons to decree what they call an "institution of petitionary prayer" by deciding that some things will occur if and only if people pray for them. If God has in fact created such an institution, then there are some good things that God will not bring about if we don't pray for them, so we'd better pray for them. But which things are they? Can we know? Should we pray only for those things? How specific and how earnest must our prayers be for those things before God will answer them? The Howard-Snyders leave unspecified these aspects of the institution. But they argue anyway that it is valuable enough for God to decree because it would extend a good thing, namely, human responsibility for one's own welfare and the welfare of others.[2] In order to do this, they defend Richard Swinburne and Isaac Choi against criticisms that I have developed elsewhere.

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[1] Davison 2009.
[2] Daniel and Frances Howard-Snyder, "The Puzzle of Petitionary Prayer", *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 2(2)2010, p. 51-2.

2. Suppose that the Howard-Snyders were right that the institution of petitionary prayer would extend such responsibility. Would this show that the institution was "valuable enough" for God to decree? I don't think so. The Howard-Snyders claim that our degree of responsibility "for the good that comes about through God's granting our petitions might be quite substantial."[3] But responsibility is a two-edged sword: if people can deserve praise for answered prayers, then they can also deserve blame for not praying effectively. The belief that such blame might be appropriate (even if it isn't in a particular case) can create significant heartache for many people, especially since we cannot tell whether God would have acted differently had we prayed (or prayed differently). For many people, there is a great deal of anxiety about what to ask for and even a loss of confidence in God due to unanswered prayers. Since some of the consequences of decreeing the institution of petitionary prayer would be bad for us, can we say that, on balance, it would be good for God to decree?

To make the points of this question more clear, compare the Howard-Snyder's suggestion about God's increasing our responsibility for ourselves and others through decreeing the institution of petitionary prayer to other ways in which God might increase such responsibility, such as by increasing our power or our knowledge. For example, I suppose that God could have given us psychic powers that enabled us to move objects at a distance without contact, or extra-sensory perceptual abilities that would have permitted us to know things at a distance without using the five senses. [4] Would it have been better for God to give us those abilities? Well, it depends, I suppose, on a huge number of factors. I would not presume to know either way. It would certainly extend our responsibility for ourselves and others, but all by itself, this does not show that it would be a good thing, all things considered.

So even if the Howard-Snyders have successfully defended Swinburne and Choi against my criticisms, this by itself would not show that the institution is valuable enough for God to decree, all things considered. I suppose that one could claim here that God is omniscient, and since

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[3] "The Puzzle of Petitionary Prayer," p. 61.

[4] For a defense of the claim that some people actually possess such abilities, see Braude 2002 and 2003.

God decreed it, it must have been valuable enough, all things considered. But then one would need to show that God has in fact decreed this institution, and many people (including many Christian theists) would share my skepticism about the prospects for success in that venture.

3. Do the Howard-Snyders successfully answer my criticisms of Swinburne and Choi? With regard to Swinburne, my conclusion was that "it seems unlikely that one is responsible (in any substantial sense) for the results of answered prayer."[5] The Howard-Snyders reconstructed my argument for this conclusion as follows:

1. It is impossible for one to reasonably believe that one's petition was granted by God.

2. If it is impossible for one to reasonably believe that one's petition was granted by God, then one is not responsible (in any substantial sense) for the results of God's granting it.

3. So, one is not responsible (in any substantial sense) for the results of God's granting one's petition.[6]

My criticism of Swinburne was actually based on two of the three of the factors that (I claimed to) determine degrees of moral responsibility, not (just) my claim that it is impossible for one to reasonably believe that one's petition was granted by God in retrospect. I said that

[I]n general, one's degree of responsibility for the obtaining of some state of affairs depends upon the degree to which one could foresee its obtaining, the degree to which one intended that it obtain as a result of one's actions, and the degree to which one's actions contributed causally to its obtaining. So cases in which one person petitions another person to act freely in specific ways over time, especially when one does not know the outcome of such petitions, are cases in which one's responsibility for the obtaining of the state of affairs in question is dramatically diminished.[7]

My point was that in the case of petitionary prayer, one cannot foresee the result and one barely causally contributes to it (if at all). The Howard-

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[5] Davison 2009, p. 296.
[6] "The Puzzle of Petitionary Prayer," p. 53.
[7] Davison 2009, p. 296.

Snyders offer a three part reply to my argument, and I should like to consider each part briefly in turn.

5. The first of the three replies is the "So What?" reply:

> But how does any of this imply that the institution of petitionary prayer does not extend human responsibility? We don't see how. After all, even if you are only somewhat responsible for your friend's being healed, your free petition was necessary and sufficient for it given that the institution was in place. That's responsibility enough.[8]

The claim that one's petition was "necessary and sufficient" for the healing of one's friend "given that the institution [of petitionary prayer] was in place" is intriguing. As I indicated above, the description of the institution that the Howard-Snyders give is not very detailed, so it is hard to know if this claim is true. (Does the institution include God's specific intentions to answer specific prayers? If so, is this based on middle knowledge? What exactly does the institution include?)

A more general worry with the argument here has to do with what counts as "enough" responsibility. We often talk about "the last straw," implying that the last straw is the one that broke the camel's back. After all, given that the other straws were already in place on the camel's back, this one last straw's presence was necessary and sufficient for breaking the camel's back. In Fred Dretske's useful terminology, this last straw was a "triggering cause," as opposed to a "structuring cause."[9] But this doesn't mean that the last straw contributes causally to the breaking of the camel's back more than any other straw does; they all make the same contribution (assuming that they have the same weight, of course). The contribution of the last straw is a salient one to us because it is the last straw, but we must keep this contribution in perspective.

Suppose now that we complicate the picture a little bit. Imagine that there is a long line of people, each waiting to place a single straw on the camel's back, one at a time. Suppose also that the person placing the final straw cannot foresee that it will make any difference to the camel's back. (Perhaps this person has no idea how much a pile of straw weighs,

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[8] "The Puzzle of Petitionary Prayer," p. 53.

[9] Dretske 1988; also see Davison 1994.

for instance, or how much straw a camel can carry.) Finally, imagine that the camel's owner, who is standing next to the camel, also has a free choice about whether or not the camel will bear the full weight of the straws placed upon it. Now we have approximated more closely (but not exactly) the complicated situation described by the Howard-Snyders as "the institution of petitionary prayer." But it is not clear in this case that the person placing the last straw upon the camel's back will have any significant responsibility for the breaking of the camel's back. After all, this person will have no more responsibility for breaking the camel's back than any of the other ten thousand or so people who laid straws on the camel's back beforehand.[10] This is important because the Howard-Snyders claim that even a slight extension of our responsibility for ourselves and others is "enough," and it is not clear how much is enough, since it is not clear that the good consequences of decreeing the institution of petitionary prayer outweigh the bad ones (as noted above).

6. The second of the three replies in defense of Swinburne involves the Howard-Snyders taking issue with my epistemological claim that apart from direct revelation, it is impossible to know whether or not a given prayer has been answered – or at least one of them does this, since they disagree on this point. I have developed some new arguments to support my conclusion here, but this is not the place to introduce them, so I will let the Howard-Snyders continue to debate this question with one another. If the one who agrees with me can persuade the other one to agree with me, though, it means that the foresight condition on moral responsibility probably cannot be satisfied (apart from direct revelation, of course: for more on foresight and responsibility, see below).

7. Finally, in the third of three replies in defense of Swinburne, the Howard-Snyders suppose, for the sake of the argument, that I am right in thinking that the foresight condition cannot be met, but then argue

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[10] I am not assuming here that responsibility is like a pie that must be divided; I recognize that two people can be fully responsible for the same thing (as Zimmerman argues persuasively in Zimmerman 1985). My point is that all of the participants are equally responsible to the same degree, and this degree is very small because each one makes a very small causal contribution to the outcome.

that significant responsibility is still possible. They offer two arguments for this conclusion. The first involves the startling claim that the causal contribution that you might make in a case of answered petitionary prayer "won't be significantly less than the degree to which you contribute causally in bringing about various mundane states of affairs." They say that

> This is not surprising; after all, your freely asking is necessary and sufficient for her being healed, given that the institution of petitionary prayer is in place. To be sure, you didn't set the institution in place, but then we didn't set in place the standing conditions that allow us to contribute causally to the way the world is. Indeed, it seems we had no greater influence on those conditions than the institution in question, in which case it seems that the degree to which your asking contributes causally to your friend's being healed is no less than the degree to which a particular act of yours contributes causally to, say, the tennis ball's landing a winner or the sockeye and zucchini being grilled to perfection.[11]

Now I have no analysis of causal contribution to offer, but it seems obvious to me that the degrees of causal contribution described here are very different. Knowing whether or not something is necessary or sufficient relative to certain standing conditions will not permit us to determine, all by itself, degrees of causal contribution. The case of the last straw's breaking the camel's back illustrates this point.[12] Other traditional theists are quick to distance themselves from the view that petitionary prayer is effective in the same way that a magical spell might be, presumably because God is a person, God is free, and God is not obligated to answer particular prayers.[13] But the claim that a petitionary prayer is necessary and sufficient for a result (given that the institution is in place) sound very much like what we would say about the efficacy of

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[11] "The Puzzle of Petitionary Prayer," p. 60.

[12] In addition, my degree of causal contribution to the particular details of the tennis ball's landing a winner or the food's being grilled to perfection at a given time (the "triggering causes," as Dretske would say) depends on prior development of skills (some of the "structuring causes" at work here, as Dretske would say); also, there is no intervening free agent involved in these cases. For more on this, see below.

[13] On this point, see Philips 1981, chapter 6, Swinburne 1998, p. 115, and Flint 1998, p. 222.

a magical spell. (Of course, from this it does not follow that a petitioner would be responsible for nothing at all in the case of an answered prayer; for more on this question, see below.)

The second argument for the conclusion that responsibility can be significant involves an appeal to an example in which a man plugs a leak at a nuclear facility, where the method used to seal the leak is notoriously unreliable. And I agree with them that in general, it is possible to be substantially responsible for something to which one makes a substantial causal contribution, even if one cannot foresee the result with much confidence. So foresight is not necessary for responsibility. But from this it does not follow that the petitioner is responsible in any substantial sense for whatever God brings about in response to petitionary prayer. To show this, we would need a sufficient condition for responsibility, and an argument for the conclusion that this sufficient condition would be satisfied in such a case. I remain skeptical about the prospects of success for such an argument. For all of these reasons, I do not find this defense of Swinburne persuasive. This completes my brief survey and response to the Howard-Snyders' three-fold reply to my criticisms of Swinburne.

8. The Howard-Snyders also defend Isaac Choi's suggestion that petitionary prayers can be acts of love for other people. (Their reply to my argument is brief, so my reply to their reply will be brief also.) They do this by describing a case in which after initially deciding not to perform a life-saving surgery for her own reasons, a doctor freely chooses to perform the surgery in response to her husband's persuasion. In this case, they say, the husband is either a cause of his wife's action (assuming causation need not necessitate) or is partly responsible for his wife's action (assuming causation does indeed necessitate). Either way, though, the husband deserves some credit for his wife's action.

I should say instead that if the wife acts freely, then the husband is responsible for a number of things, including the fact that the wife reconsiders her decision in light of his persuasion, makes a decision of some kind, etc., but the husband is not responsible for her actual decision or its subsequent effects. After all, consider a possible world that is exactly like the one described by the Howard-Snyders except that the doctor considers carefully her husband's reasons and then decides instead *not* to perform the surgery in question. In that possible world, the husband is

responsible for exactly the same things as in the original situation – after all, he performs the same actions (makes the same causal contributions with the same intentions and foresight) in both worlds.[14] The differences between the worlds are due to the wife's decision, which is up to her. I should like to say the same thing in this case that I said about the case of petitionary prayer: if God answered X's petitionary prayer to help Y, then God would be the one responsible for the act of love that makes a difference to Y, whereas X would be responsible only for the petition (which itself might be an act of love, of course).

9. In the rest of their paper, the Howard-Snyders defend the practice of petitionary prayer against a puzzle (which they call "the puzzle of petitionary prayer").[15] They do this by advancing two claims. The first is that (1) Sometimes it would be better for God to do something in response to a request than to do it without being requested to do so. This claim is plausible, and probably dissolves the puzzle, but at best, it would explain the rationality of petitionary prayer only when this would be true. Should we pray only in cases that appear to be like this? That doesn't seem right, especially since we don't know whether particular cases are like this.

For example, should I ask God to heal SS, the mother of five young children in my parish who has brain cancer? I guess so – it seems like it would be good – but I'm not sure. I don't know why God would allow her to get brain cancer in the first place. Maybe there's something else going on here, something I don't see, maybe something that has nothing to do with me or with SS. (See the book of Job.) Would it be better for God to heal SS in response to someone's request than to do it without having been asked? I don't know; I can't tell; it depends on the details.

Perhaps (1) suggests that I have something like a Pascalian wager-type reason to pray: for all I know, SS's healing might hinge on my prayer, so I should pray – the possible payoff justifies the small cost. (Something like this actually does motivate me to pray occasionally, when I'm desperate. We seem to ask for help only when we have no other live options; nobody asks God to pass the salt.) But this reasoning would lead me to pray all

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[14] For more on this kind of argument, see Davison 1999.
[15] "The Puzzle of Petitionary Prayer," p. 45.

the time for every important thing for everyone, and that's too much; I have other things I need to do. (Someone might say, "Trust in God – He would not require so much;" I would reply: "Yes, trust in God – He would not require petitions at all.") This pragmatic reason for praying also seems incompatible with the idea that one must pray earnestly in faith, but I cannot pursue that idea here.

10. The second claim advanced by the Howard-Snyders to defuse the puzzle is based on Geoffrey Cupit's arguments. It is this: (2) Sometimes requests create new obligations in God, which can tip the scales of God's reasons in favor of doing what is requested. I find this claim to be implausible. Cupit claims that requests generate new obligations which are independent of the requestee's existing reasons for doing something. But contrary to what Cupit's account would predict, petitionary prayers typically try to highlight God's existing reasons for acting. Very rarely do people seem to think that they can create a new obligation for God simply by asking, and when they do, we are very suspicious of them. (Think of televangelists who promise to bring our requests directly to God, for a small fee.) I think that's because we feel that God is not obligated to us in the way that other humans are.

Cupit may be right that we have defeasible obligations to regard requests from other humans as reasons to act, but these are often defeated. Imagine that a young child asks a competent scientist to do something entertaining with an expensive and powerful piece of equipment instead of finishing an important experiment. We would expect the scientist to treat the child with respect, but not to consider seriously the request, since there is too much at stake and the scientist already knows what is best to do in this situation. If the divine/human situation is like this one, and I suspect that it is, then I doubt that our prayers, via Cupit's mechanism, could generate any new obligations for God, especially where serious things are at stake.

Suppose that I am wrong about Cupit. Still, even if the Howard-Snyders are right about requests creating divine obligations, this will help to explain the rationality of offering petitionary prayers only in cases in which God's reasons for doing something were roughly equal to God's reasons for not doing it. But how often does that occur? (Is SS's case like this?) I have no idea. Cupit says that the obligation created by a request is

defeated if the request is for a bad thing; perhaps my petitionary prayers are all defeated in this way. I have no way of knowing if this is so. Once again, my only reason for praying seems to be a wager, and it's not a very strong one.

11. At one point, the Howard-Snyders consider the idea that we could receive all of the benefits of the institution of petitionary prayer if we simply believed, falsely, that it was in place. They reject this idea by criticizing two possible ways in which it might be true. But they do not consider the possibility that some people misinterpreted particular events long ago, sincerely believed in answered prayer on that basis, and passed along this false belief innocently to others over many years. Belief in the institution would be reinforced by the "self-serving bias," an apparently robust psychological tendency to attribute good things to one's own efforts, even if such attribution is not deserved. It would also give people a sense of control when all of their normal resources failed. As far as I can tell, this explanation of the belief in the institution of petitionary prayer might well be the correct one.

In the end, I don't think that the Howard-Snyders have provided a very strong rationale for engaging in the practice of petitionary prayer, especially in light of other puzzles that they do not address here. But as I said at the beginning, I was already skeptical about petitionary prayer from the start. Still, I always find the Howard-Snyders's work to be provocative, insightful, and helpful, so I will always look forward to the work that they do in this area.

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BOOK REVIEW & NOTICES

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John Haldane. *Reasonable Faith*. **London: Routledge, 2010.**

John Haldane is widely noted for the breadth of his knowledge of history, theology, and the many disciplines of philosophy. That can make it exceedingly difficult to summarize or assess his work. This is especially so in the present volume, because it collects 13 essays previously published in various journals and other collections. However, perhaps for this very reason, it is easy to see some themes that unite them. This book is a companion to a previous volume, *Faithful Reason*, which, very roughly, set out the consequences for various disciplines and activities of taking the Catholic intellectual tradition seriously. In the present volume, the move is in the opposite direction: It shows how various academic traditions and practices support the truth of two fundamental aspects of Catholic thought: the existence of God and the existence of the soul, God's image in humans. The two movements are not fully distinct, though, because the fact that certain deeply human practices are intelligible only on the supposition of God and the soul itself provides a transcendental argument for Christian theism.

The volume is divided roughly in half according to these two themes. Part I "Reason, faith, and God" has six essays. Part II "Reason, faith and the soul" has seven. Part I has—in addition to the Introduction—two chapters focusing on pretty cerebral metaphysics and then three chapters on matters of the heart. Part II has multiple essays pertaining to value considerations as well as the nature of rationality. The broad sweep and diversity of these essays defy summary in a short space, so I shall resort to the reviewer's trick of giving the reader a few samples from each section.

In "Metaphysics, common sense and the existence of God," the problematic of realism(s of various kinds) vs. anti-realism(s) is the starting

point for a journey to a spot from which Thomistic metaphysics vindicates and is vindicated by a commonsense take on the world (this mutual support arises out of explanatory coherence, not a vicious circularity). This move surely comes as no surprise. However, exemplifying a fairness to idealism uncharacteristic of those for whom Aquinas is a guiding star, he argues that anti-realist beginnings are just as liable to lead to God. He begins with an interesting and serious interaction with arguments from Berkeley before considering such contemporary thinkers as Dummett and McDowell. In fact, the connection between anti-realism and theism seems to be more substantive than the connection between realism and theism. I had expected the connection between realism and theism to go something like this: realism entails real natures and real natures only make sense in a creation account. There were some hints at this, but for the most part the connection discussed was simply that the premises for the cosmological and teleological arguments are taken from facts about mind-independent reality, which is pretty thin as far as conceptual connections go. In the discussion of idealism, I thought initially that common sense—prominently placed in the title—had been left behind. However, Haldane's fascinating narrative wove Aquinas and Berkeley together in a way that lessened the gap between them.

In "The restless heart: philosophy and the meaning of theism," Haldane considers a less cerebral route to God but one that is no less philosophically astute. In it Haldane discusses with his usual insight and verve an argument few academic philosophers are willing to discuss: the argument from desire. He defends the thesis that our inclination to believe in God and our desire for God count as evidence that there is in fact a God. Unsurprisingly, this chapter draws on Saint Augustine and C. S. Lewis, but also, somewhat to my astonishment, another "C. S.": Pierce. Gems like this are part of what makes reading Haldane a delight. He's simply read everything and has it to hand when called for. The Pierce we meet sees God and scientific inquiry knit together in a seamless garment of explanatory coherence.

After laying out the argument in deductive form, he evaluates the premises and general framework. I will only comment upon his defense of the most questionable premise: that every natural desire has a corresponding real object as its satisfier. This premise relies crucially on the distinction between a natural desire and a non-natural desire. It

is hard to think of non-natural desires other than acquired or artificial desires, but I think Haldane's case would have been strengthened by querying further the possibility of a non-natural desire that is not artificial in the way his examples are, something like the suggested idea of the meme (for which, it always bears repeating, there is no scientific evidence of any rigorous sort).

Haldane identifies a number of common traits of natural desires—spontaneity, prevalence, and a certain kind of linguistic trait which I don't fully understand, but which seems to amount to prevalence of identification across natural languages (this third is very interesting and warrants further, detailed study). He points out that it seems, *prima facie* at least, that the desire for supernatural transcendence has these traits, so he draws the very sane conclusion that there is at least a presumption that it has a satisfier. He ends this discussion by noting that this argument is left untouched by evolutionary explanations in terms of adaptiveness, since the two are completely compatible.

So those are but two examples, of two quite different kinds, from the first section, which focuses on God. The second section focuses on the soul, and I will again provide an example, though briefly.

The second part of the book, on the soul, contains some defense of the immateriality of the intellect based on such familiar premises as the ability of abstract thought. However, this is also woven together with considerations of other matters as dense as the philosophy of perception of John McDowell. This section also contains the expected philosophical musings on the nature of death and immortality which are nevertheless quite fresh. However, the chapter which I think shows Haldane near his best is "Human ensoulment and the value of life." Here we see not, primarily, Haldane the metaphysician or epistemologist or philosopher of mind (though these all come to bear on the issue) but Haldane the ethicist and polemicist. For this chapter does not come in a void but is in large part a response to Robert Pasnau's anti-Catholic diatribe in *Aquinas on Human Nature*. Haldane quotes Pasnau's noxious remarks in full, then, as the gentleman he his, responds not in kind but offers a protracted and detailed case to the contrary (though Pasnau is not fully spared the barb of Haldane's wit).

The case is too detailed to summarize, but Haldane is not writing as an ideologue. Rather, he draws on a multitude of diverse sources from

official Church documents to Medieval sources only a specialist could have known. One footnote documenting Pasnau's apparent ignorance of relevant literature goes on for over a page! Yet Haldane, ever taking the high road, leaves snarky comments for book reviewers. His knowledge of both ancient and contemporary embryology is astonishing, and he addresses Pasnau's argument point-by-point exhaustively.

Throughout the book, Haldane's characteristic virtues are on display. Anyone, working in almost any area of philosophy or theology, with any interest in the interaction of ancient, medieval, and contemporary thought from across the main sub-disciplines of philosophy, whether with a theoretical or practical cast of mind will find reading this collection very rewarding.

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Paul Weingartner. *God's Existence. Can it be Proven?: A Logical Commentary on the Five Ways of Thomas Aquinas.* Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2010.

Paul Weingartner lists three tasks for this book:

1. "to show that the *Five Ways* of Thomas Aquinas can be presented in a form in which all five ways are logically valid arguments."
2. "to offer a detailed and critical discussion of the premises used in the arguments including important definitions used as premises."
3. "to examine the two preliminary questions of Thomas Aquinas, 'Whether the existence of God is self-evident?' and 'Whether it can be demonstrated that God exists'" (1).

The book has the following structure: the first two questions (from task 3 above) are presented then commented on extensively. The commentary on these two questions takes the reader halfway through this short book (116 pages, from cover to cover). In the final fifty pages of the book, each of the Five Ways is presented in the following manner. First the original Latin text is presented. Then the English translation from the Fathers of the English Dominican Province is given. At this point, for the sake of completing his first task, Weingartner takes the following two steps. "The first step is a preliminary interpretation under the title 'the premises and conclusions of the text' which attempts to concentrate all the relevant parts into natural language and making [*sic*] them as precise as possible. The second step translates this into the symbolic language of First Order Predicate Logic" (2). Finally, Weingartner provides a commentary on the terms, premises, and inferences of the Way in question. The book is well formatted, and it is easy to navigate.

We have seen some very helpful treatments of the Five Ways in the last decade or so.[1] Unfortunately, this book does not rise to their level. In what follows, I will present three problems, along with illustrations of

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[1] See, for instance, Bochenski, Joseph M. (2000) "The Five Ways" in *The Rationality of Theism*, ed. Adolfo García de la Sienra (Atlanta: Rodopi), 61-92; Wippel, John (2000), *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press), Chapter 12.

each. They are: (i) the commentary discusses too few topics, and does so in too shallow a manner; (ii) Weingartner's interpretation of many key concepts in the Five Ways is mistaken; (iii) the two-step translation process outlined above from the preliminary interpretation of the arguments to the First Order Predicate Logic (FOPL) reconstruction is done poorly.

Consider the first problem. Weingartner's second task in the book is "to offer a detailed and critical discussion of the premises" of the Ways. This is not done. Take the discussion of the First Way as an example. The commentary on the First Way is a mere five pages, with three of those five pages spent discussing how one should define the term "First Mover." There are only two other topics on which Weingartner comments. The first is whether step 6 in the formalization should be presented as following from prior premises, or presented as a premise itself. The second concerns the important question of how one should understand the meaning of the Latin word, *movetur*. The cluster of important questions concerning *movetur* receives little more than a page of commentary, though the questions here are myriad and complex. Should *movetur* be translated intransitively, as a one-place predicate—x is in motion—or passively, as a two-place predicate—x is moved by y? What is the scope of motion in the First Way? Does he mean simply local motion? Or does it extend beyond local motion to qualitative and quantitative change as many claim? In addition to questions about the meaning of *movetur*, there are many other points where a reader desires commentary in the First Way. For instance, premise (4) says "Whatever moves the other is in actuality in that respect" (54). Beside the difficulties in phrasing here (the other *what*?; in *what* respect?), a common objection looms. There are many instances when something is not actual in a certain respect but moves things in that respect. What the reader needs here, and does not receive, is a commentary on how one ought to interpret this premise. Furthermore, since Weingartner reads *movetur* in the First Way as referring only to movement of physical bodies through space (see page 57), one wonders what sense it makes to talk about actuality in respect of movement across space. Even more difficult to understand is how God could be in actuality in respect of the movement of material bodies in space. And furthermore, even in mundane examples, I can push things rather than pulling them. That is, I can be potentially in my

office, though push the chair to be actually in my office. I needn't pull the chair through the threshold of the door so that I am in actuality towards being in my office before my chair is. Commentary on this premise and the surrounding issues would have been helpful for the reader.

Similar points can be made for the other Ways. The Fifth Way, for instance, receives a mere two and a half pages of commentary (the Second Way receives the most commentary with eleven pages). On a related point, the commentary in the book is not well informed by the secondary literature on the Ways. The index lists fewer than five secondary sources that deal with the Five Ways in any detail, and only two works, from my count, that give a thorough examination of the Ways. The book would have greatly benefited from deeper and more prolonged commentary on the Ways.

The second difficulty I find in this book is that Weingartner's interpretation of some salient concepts of the Five Ways is faulty. For instance, I have already discussed his treatment of *movetur* in the First Way. Weingartner reads the scope of *movetur* narrowly, as only applying "to movement of material bodies in space" (57). The text, however, does not bear this interpretation out, since an example of motion that Aquinas uses in the very text of the First Way is that of fire moving wood to be hot, which is itself qualitative change, and not movement of a material body through space.

An example from the Second Way comes from Weingartner's interpretation of efficient causation. He says, writing about the premise "To take away the cause is to take away the effect", that "it should be underlined that it is very important that *efficient cause* is described or even defined there as a necessary condition" (66, Weingartner's italics). There are many problems with this interpretation of efficient causation. For instance, many premises in Weingartner's formulation come out false if Aquinas meant efficient causes to be defined as necessary conditions in this Way. Consider premise (2), which says "There is no case in which a thing is the efficient cause of itself" (62). This is false if being an efficient cause is defined as being a necessary condition in this argument, since any thing is, trivially, a necessary condition for itself. Likewise, premise (3), that "In efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity" is false, since mere necessary conditions can go on to infinity. Consider the series, "P is true;" "It is true that 'P is true;'" "It is true

that 'it is true that 'P is true;'" etc. Each is a necessary condition for the other(s), and the regress carries on infinitely. Furthermore, this example shows that efficient causation, if defined as merely being a necessary condition, can be circular, since two things can be necessary conditions for one another (as is the case with the right-hand and left-hand side of any true biconditional). For another example, which I do not have space to discuss here, see the understanding of 'maximum' in the Fourth Way.

The final difficulty with this book is that the two-step translation process outlined above from the reconstructions of the arguments to the First Order Predicate Logic (FOPL) is done poorly. They are not presented in a reader friendly way. It is sometimes unclear which premises from the first step are being reconstructed in the second step (see, for instance, premises 8b and 14-16 of the Third Way, pg 77). The inference rule used to derive one line from others is sometimes cited but more often it is not, leaving the reader to try to figure out which rule, or rules, were employed to arrive at the line (see, for instance, the inference from 3 and 4 to 5 in the First Way, pg 55). This is a significant hindrance for the book, since the first task Weingartner sets himself in this book is to show that the proofs are deductively valid. To show this, it is not sufficient to name which premises are involved in the inference, the reader needs to know which deductively valid inference steps are employed as well. Weingartner uses numbers within parentheses (e.g., "(5b)") to number the lines of the first step, and uses numbers without parentheses (e.g., "8a") to number the lines of the FOPL translation, which can lead to some confusion for the reader. Finally, the definitions of the predicates employed in the reconstruction are listed at the end of the proof with little explanation.

The book contains numerous instances where the move from the first-step to the second-step fails. For example, see the step in the Third Way from the natural language premise (5b) to the FOPL translation 8a. Premise (5b):

(5b) because that which does not exist, only begins to exist by something already existing

Is translated as

8a. $\exists t \forall x(\neg EX_t x) \rightarrow \neg \Diamond \exists y \exists t(BEG_t y)$

where "$EX_t x...x$ exists at t (t_0=present)" and "$BEG_t y...y$ begins at t" (77). In English, 8a says that if there is a time at which nothing exists,

then it is not possible for there to exist a thing and a time such that the thing begins to exist at that time. This is a poor translation of (5b). The same existential operator does not bind both times. And so the antecedent could be about one time and the consequent about another. For instance, suppose there exists a time, say, the first instant of the year 2700AD at which nothing exists. From this it would follow, given 8a, that it is not possible for a thing to begin to exist at a time. But why would it be impossible for Napoleon to begin existing at a certain time on August 15th, 1769, given that almost a millennium later at the first instant of 2700AD nothing exists? The premise should tell the reader, instead, that if there is a time at which nothing exists, then at that very time, and for any time such that it is later than that time, it is not possible that something begin to exist. Moreover, note that even if 8a were revised to avoid this translation error, it would still be a poor *translation* of (5b). (5b) tells us *why* it is that something cannot begin existing at times after which nothing exists (because something already existing is required to bring the new thing into existence). But 8a leaves out this vital reason.

Another example comes from the Fourth Way. Weingartner states the fourth premise of the Fourth Way (88):

(4) The maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus.

His translation of this premise into FOPL reads (88):

7. $\forall z \forall r (MJzrf \rightarrow Czru)$

where "*MJxyf…x* is greater than *y* w.r.t. perfection" and "*Czru…z* causes *r* w.r.t. being" (89). In English, 7 says that for any thing, *z*, and any thing, *r*, if *z* is greater than *r* with respect to perfection, then *z* causes *r* with respect to being. More colloquially, for any two things, if one is more perfect than the other, then the more perfect one causes the other to be. This is not a satisfactory translation of (4) into FOPL. As Weingartner notes (93),

the levels of perfection correspond to levels of being and the levels of being correspond to the actuality of essential forms. Therefore a rough division of levels of perfection is this: (a) non-living beings, (b) living beings without senses, (c) animals, (d) human beings, (e) angels, (f) God.

So some human, Bob, is more perfect than any non-living thing, any plant, and any non-rational animal. By $\forall$ elimination on 7 (substituting Bob for *z*), we can derive, in English, that for any *r*, if Bob is more perfect

than *r*, Bob is the cause of *r*. Then, noting Bob's level of perfection, we can substitute in any animal or plant for *r* and yield that Bob causes that animal or plant. So, by 7, each individual human is the cause of each individual non-living thing, plant, and non-rational animal. (4) does not have this unfortunate entailment, and so 7 is not a satisfactory translation of 4 into FOPL. The error is with using two universal quantifiers in this way. This same type of error appears in premises 5 and 6 of the argument as well (88). A similar error appears in the translation from (1) to 1 of the Fifth Way (95). This error, like the error in Way Four, infects other premises in the argument (premises 2-4).

In summary, while the book is carefully laid out and there are some parts of interest, Weingartner's commentaries don't cover enough material, his understanding of some major concepts in the Five Ways is flawed, and his formalizations contain serious errors.[2]

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Kevin Timpe (ed). ***Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump***. **Routledge, 2009.**

Eleonore Stump's innumerable contributions to philosophy of religion, Thomism, and Christian thought more generally receive a fitting tribute in this impressive collection of fourteen essays. The works are invariably clear and well-written. A number of them interact with Stump's own recent and past works, and many succeed in making original contributions to important debates. I cannot hope to summarize them all here, and will instead attempt a representative sampling of what is on offer.

Peter van Inwagen leads off with "God and Other Uncreated Things." He argues that there are abstract objects, at least some of which are real even though not created by God or causally dependent on Him. One implication van Inwagen draws from this is a theological one: when the Nicene Creed proclaims that God is creator of all things, both visible and invisible, this must be interpreted as allowing for an implicit restriction to concrete entities.

He first gives an argument for the independence of abstracta based on a theory of properties that he has developed in detail elsewhere. According to this view, a property is similar to a proposition, in that they are both things that are assertible. But they differ in that a proposition is a 'saturated' assertible; it can be asserted without qualification. One can simply assert the proposition that the earth goes around the sun. But a property is an unsaturated assertible. It always requires qualification, because a property can only be asserted of something. So, "a property *of* something *x*, a property that *x has* or *instantiates* or *exemplifies*, I say, is simply an unsaturated assertible that can be said truly of *x*" (p. 9). Now, the question of whether there are independent abstracta is closely related to the question of whether such abstracta can ever exist uninstantiated. Given his theory of properties, van Inwagen believes they can: "An uninstantited or unexemplified property, therefore, is a thing that can be said of things but cannot be said truly of anything. And obviously there are such assertibles if there are any unsaturated assertibles at all. One of the things you can say about something, for example, is that it

is a woman who was the president of the United States in the twentieth century. . . . But that thing, although it can be said of things, can't be said truly of anything. It is therefore an uninstantiated property, and its existence refutes the thesis that properties can exist only in the things that have them" (pp. 9-10).

He then gives an argument for independence that he takes to be neutral between his own particular theory of properties and other such theories: "Properties and other abstract objects themselves have properties, and many of the properties of abstract objects could not be properties of concrete objects. The number 510 has such properties as being an even number and having irrational square roots, for example, and the property ductility has the property of being instantiated and the property of entailing the property solidity. It cannot be true of *these* properties – being an even number and being instantiated, and so on – that they exist only in the concrete objects that have them, for they are not had by concrete objects at all" (p. 10). Given that this is the case, God cannot create all abstracta by virtue of creating concrete objects.

Van Inwagen then points out that the defender of the idea that abstracta depend on God could press her case in two ways: first by arguing that God creates abstracta *ex nihilo*, just as He creates concrete objects. Van Inwagen sees this idea as strictly irrefutable but immensely implausible. Another option would be to stipulate that abstracta are ideas in God's mind, and so causally dependent on that mind. So just as we might be taken to be the creators of our thoughts – or more precisely, the events that are our acts of thinking – so God might be seen as the creator of His thoughts, and hence of the abstracta that figure in them. But in addition to worries arising from what van Inwagen sees as the dubious ontological status of events, this account of the situation makes no progress over the idea that God simply creates abstracta *ex nihilo*. Granting that events are a legitimate category, and granting that God's thoughts are events, such events still have abstract objects as constituents. "If thoughts have constituents, and if God is the creator of his thoughts, then, surely, God must be the creator of all the constituents of his thoughts?" (p. 16). So van Inwagen reaches the conclusion that at least some abstracta are necessary beings existing independently of any concrete entity, including God.

In "Aquinas, Divine Simplicity and Divine Freedom," Brian Leftow lays out the problem of reconciling God's freedom with His simplicity.

(As appropriate for a volume dedicated to Stump, about half of the contributions focus on some aspect of Thomistic thought.) For Aquinas, God is simple, such that His essence is ontologically identical with His will. "So if God has His essence necessarily, it seems to follow that for Thomas He has His actual volition necessarily. But then it seems that He necessarily wills what He does: that it is not possible that He do otherwise." (p. 21) This conflicts with divine freedom. Leftow lays out some strategies Aquinas employs to get around this problem (which exposition includes a clear and helpful discussion of the relationship between Aquinas' modal concepts and those employed in contemporary possible worlds analysis). He then engages with Stump's own creative interpretation of Aquinas on this point, where she argues that the differences in God's will between our world and other possible worlds is one in which the differences in divine volition are not real differences involving changes in God's intrinsic traits across worlds, but only differences in God's relation to extrinsic objects – mere Cambridge changes across possible worlds. Leftow critiques this proposal and puts forward one of his own, according to which there is a real difference in the content of God's volition across possible worlds, and that this entails real intrinsic differences in God across possible worlds, but only minor differences in the *manner* of God's willing rather than in its essential content. Leftow initially takes it that allowing for such a fine-grained intrinsic difference in God is not destructive of divine simplicity, but he also acknowledges that it remains in tension with that doctrine, and calls for further work on the issue.

In "Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God," Michael Rea first argues that the terminology of the 'hiddenness' debate should be shifted. Speaking of divine 'silence' rather than divine 'hiddenness' carries less negative baggage. "To say that something is hidden implies either that it has been deliberately concealed or that it has been concealed (deliberately or not) to such a degree that those from whom it is hidden can't reasonably be expected to find it." (P. 80) Clarifying further, he writes that "God is evidently not making any special effort to ensure that most of us receive communicative content from him. A man who chooses to whisper rather than shout instructions to his children, knowing all the while that they cannot (yet) hear him over the racket they are making, is being silent toward his children in the sense that I have in mind. . . . As I understand it, then, divine silence is compatible with God's having

provided some widely and readily accessible way for his creatures to find him and to experience his presence, albeit indirectly, despite his silence" (P. 81). Also, Rea challenges the idea that one must come up with some explanation for God's hiddenness (or silence) that explains how, in the end, it is actually being done for our greater well-being. In fact, the answer might be that, while hiddenness is done for a greater good, it's not done for *our* greater good. Rather, it might be for the greater good that is God's communicating via the modes of communication that are proper for Him, which may not include the kind of evidence provision (via natural theology and / or personal religious experience) that we expect or even demand. "If, as I am suggesting, divine silence is an outgrowth of the divine personality or of God's preferences about how to interact with creatures like us, then divine silence is plausibly thought of as good in and of itself, or good as a means to the expression of the perfectly good and beautiful divine personality" (P. 86). Further, there might be reasons here that we just aren't privy to. "God is as alien and 'wholly other' from us as it is possible for another person to be. Thus, it is hard to see how we could say with any confidence at all what his silence indicates" (P. 83).

But what about the fact that we suffer from this divine silence? Well, if it is reasonable for God to be silent, for reasons we don't understand, then it is unreasonable for us to be upset about it. Rather, we should charitably assume that there is a good reason God is remaining silent, just as we would adopt such a principle of charity for a person whose modes of communication seemed odd to us. Further, there may be ways we can experience the divine silence such that it is of benefit to us, helping us to grow in maturity or in our ability to relate to others (P. 87).

On top of all this, Rea is inclined to think that God does in fact communicate with us, just not in the direct ways we might expect. This mitigates the worry that God's silence indicates a lack of concern on His part. And what are the indirect methods? Here Rea draws on Stump's recent work concerning biblical narrative. Stump develops an account according to which narrative provides us with second-person experience; through narrative, another's experience can actually be made available to us, and the biblical accounts supply us with potent examples of experience of God. Rea also suggests liturgy as another means of mediate experience of the divine. He further suggests that since these methods of divine communication are "readily and widely accessible"

(p. 93) we can conclude that God's silence is not total, but only partial, and we can have faith that the reason behind it is a good one, even if we are not privy to it.

Rea's chapter provides a good deal of material for further reflection here, particularly on the idea that God's silence is justified not because it furthers our well-being but because it is appropriate to or fitting for God in some way. However, the reliance on narrative and liturgy to mitigate the worry seems problematic to me. After all, for most of the human race, and for most of human history (and pre-history), the biblical narratives and Christian liturgy were wholly unknown and far from readily accessible. Even today they are inaccessible for a great many. (One thinks here of Maitzen's demographic version of the problem of hiddenness.) Something more is required to buttress the account supplied by Rea – perhaps the notion, favoured by C. S. Lewis among others, that God revealed Himself, at least to a degree, in pre-Christian pagan religious narratives?

The final two essays, "Love and Damnation" by C. P. Ragland, and "Friendship in Heaven: Aquinas on Supremely Perfect Happiness and the Communion of the Saints," by Christopher Brown, are also the two most impressive in the collection. The former provides incisive analyses and sympathetic critiques of the theodicies of hell provided by Stump, C. S. Lewis, and Richard Swinburne. The latter supplies both an exegetical tour de force, reconciling seemingly conflicting doctrines in Aquinas' understanding of the beatific vision, and an original philosophical contribution in its own right.

On the whole, a worthy tribute to a scholar who has given so much to the field.

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Bradley Monton. *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist Defends Intelligent Design*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2009.

Bradley Monton's *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist Defends Intelligent Design* is a bold attempt to abstract the arguments of Intelligent Design (ID) beyond the embattled cultural and political context that has granted the theory such notoriety, and assess the central claims of the theory dispassionately. What are the claims of ID, what are the arguments to support them, and are these good arguments? Monton feels that, as a philosopher, these are the terms on which the theory should be judged; the "culture war" (p. 12) should be ignored. Although Monton is not persuaded by the arguments, he does consent that they are "somewhat plausible" (p. 75), causing him to be less certain of his atheism than he would have been had he not heard the arguments.

He begins by seeking a clear understanding of ID's claims in Chapter One: "What Is Intelligent Design, and Why Might an Atheist Believe in It?" After a prolonged, and occasionally simplistic, discussion of what ID *cannot* be claiming, we finally come to Monton's version of ID:

> The theory of intelligent design holds that certain global features of the universe provide evidence for the existence of an intelligent cause, or that certain biologically innate features of living things provide evidence for the doctrine that the features are the result of the intentional actions of an intelligent cause which is not biologically related to the living things, and provide evidence against the doctrine that the features are the result of an undirected process such as natural selection. (p. 39)

Monton has tried very hard to formulate a statement of ID that accurately captures the claims of ID whilst ruling out any awkwardly simple ways in which the claims can be made trivially true. His is certainly an improvement on the Discovery Institute's statement: "The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection." (p. 16) Monton correctly identifies

that this can be made trivially true in such mundane circumstances as the construction of buildings, but does such mundane clarification need to be made? Perhaps it's too simple to state that 'everyone knows' what the claims of ID are, and it is legitimate and admirable to try and isolate the *actual* claims of ID from potentially misleading preconceptions, but Monton's philosophically rigorous formulation is noticeably selective and betrays his own intentions. He is balancing between, on the one hand, retaining an authentic and accurate version of ID's claims, whilst on the other preserving the possibility of a non-theistic, strictly 'natural' solution. Each refinement across the 25 page section within the first chapter moulds the ultimate statement into a 'just right' balance between being complicated enough to rule out trueness by triviality, whilst simultaneously refraining from going all the way to a full-fledged statement of supernatural theism.

Monton's claim is that ID is not inherently theistic; at the end of chapter one he argues for this claim:

> It is true that almost all proponents of intelligent design believe in a supernatural creator, but it doesn't follow that the thesis that there is a supernatural creator is part of the intelligent design doctrine itself. The intelligent design proponents . . . *have chosen to put forth their doctrine in such a way that it involves some sort of commitment to an intelligent cause, without specifying whether that intelligent cause is supernatural.* (p. 41, emphasis added)

But have *they* chosen to put forth their doctrine in such a way, or has *Monton* chosen to formulate it so? Is intelligent design, as a matter of fact, not inherently theistic? We may grant that it is not necessarily so, but perhaps there is a recognisable difference between what ID proponents could say and what they do say. Monton ignores what might be termed the 'brute facts of the matter' – namely that ID is considered by many to demonstrably be 'creationism in disguise' – leading him to defend a version of ID that perhaps not even ID proponents would endorse.

The claim that ID is not necessarily inherently theistic is important to Monton for two reasons: Firstly, surrendering the inherent requirement of a necessarily supernatural solution (i.e. God) preserves the status of ID as being 'legitimate' science. Secondly, he needs this claim to be true in order to isolate the arguments of ID from its cultural context of 'merely

religious creationism in disguise'. In chapter two, "Why It Is Legitimate to Treat Intelligent Design as Science", he takes up these issues via a discussion of the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* case. Monton is very critical of the ruling cast by judge John E. Jones III (judge Jones decided that "intelligent design counts as religion, not science, and hence the teaching of intelligent design in public school is unconstitutional" (p. 48)). Monton claims the judge, and those supporting his position, are mistaken when they claim that ID 'is not science' as 'science does not allow for supernatural causes'. Such an *a priori* dismissal of supernatural causes renders science less a pursuit of truth, more a pursuit of "generating the best theories that can be formulated subject to the restriction that the theories are naturalistic" (p. 58). Notably, whichever conclusion we draw on this, whether supernatural causes are a part of science or not, isn't strictly relevant to Monton's discussion anyway, as he has already claimed that ID is not inherently theistic or supernatural. But in any case, we might ask if this reading of the situation is fair. Judge Jones did appear to appeal to an overly-ambitious and flawed definition of science, and Monton is right to highlight this. Generally, however, when critics of ID deny that it is 'science', claim that it is 'unscientific', etc., are they literally claiming that it is 'not science'? Or are they rather stating that it is 'not scientific *enough*'? If an aging parent passes comment on the sound of a popular beat-combo emanating from a teenager's room, "that's not music, that's just noise", do they literally mean that it's not music, or do they rather mean to imply that it does not meet the required standards of tunefulness to qualify as properly being called 'music'? I am inclined to think that critics of ID are doing something very similar, implicitly claiming that there are standards of science that must be met in order to qualify, and ID does not meet these standards. One of the ways that ID fails is in invoking a supernatural cause to fill in the gaps that might appear in a theory; that this gives rise to an accusation of 'not being science' is not due to the dogma that 'supernatural causes are not legitimate in science', but rather that 'supernatural causes *should not* be invoked unnecessarily in science'.

Monton's claim is that the judge was mistaken in perceiving ID as being inherently theistic, or inherently appealing to supernatural causes. Now whilst this claim might be true in Monton's abstract philosophical context, perhaps a little more sympathy should be extended to the judge,

and we should recognise that judge Jones made his decision very much within the "cultural war" context that Monton has chosen to ignore. We might consent that ID could be 'not inherently theistic', but the object of the judge's decision is the version of ID as put forward in *Of Pandas and People*, as this is the book referenced in the "disclaimer" that prompted the case; this version of ID certainly seems to be inherently theistic, given its contextual heritage. Monton might wish to ignore this context to dispassionately assess the arguments, but that option is not really open to the judge.

This reveals a deeper criticism that can be levelled at Monton's book: Is it really fair to deal with the arguments of ID in abstract, in isolation from their context? Monton is clearly aware that this move is controversial, and does spend some time attempting to justify it. Whilst chapter three, "Some Somewhat Plausible Intelligent Design Arguments", manages to stand alone as a sound attempt to do precisely such an abstract appraisal, its conclusions prompt the reader to question whether Monton is really defending "ID" at all. After a consideration of fine-tuning arguments and cosmological arguments, Monton concludes "I consider the cosmological argument a somewhat plausible intelligent design argument" (p. 99), and after an analysis of the stark improbability of life originating from non-life, and a consideration of Nick Bostrom's "simulation argument", Monton concludes "the simulation argument is another example of a somewhat plausible intelligent design argument" (p. 129).

I am tempted to ask whether many proponents of ID would endorse Monton's conclusions. How many ID-ers would consent to their theory being used in support of an argument that claims we are nothing more than a digitised plaything in some alien computer simulation? Again, the arguments of ID could be used in this way, and Monton is entitled to discuss the arguments on these terms; but are they meant to be capable of yielding these conclusions? I just don't think proponents of ID would agree. And if ID proponents do not agree with Monton's conclusions, then Monton's formulation of ID is inaccurate. He is not defending "Intelligent Design", he is defending *Bradley Monton's* intelligent design; and these two, it seems, are significantly different.

This would not matter so much if it wasn't for his final and concluding chapter four: "Should Intelligent Design Be Taught in School?". It seems

odd to discuss the appropriate course of action on an issue within a particular context, whilst insisting on a separation of that issue from its context, but this is what Monton seems to do. He assesses the question of whether ID should be taught in schools without reference to certain features of the "cultural war" from which it originates, such as the overtly religious purposes of many ID supporters. Although Monton does make some concessions to recognising the additional contextual considerations that must be taken into account when deliberating on this question, he chooses to focus upon such contextualised questions as:

> is it pedagogically good for the children to be taught intelligent design? Will it further the cause of science if children are taught intelligent design? Is it good for society as a whole if intelligent design is taught in school? Is it legally permissible for intelligent design to be taught in school? (p. 136)

These might appear to be concessions to recognising the contextual demands, but underlying all of these questions is one significant problem: The 'intelligent design' under consideration is not "Intelligent Design" as put forward by ID proponents in books such as *Of Pandas and People*, and *The Design of Life*; the ID under consideration is Monton's idealised version of ID, abstractly formulated.

So when he outlines his "Six Thoughts on Teaching Intelligent Design" (p. 141), broadly supporting the idea that ID should be taught in schools (briefly put: 1. Inquiry-based learning is better that fact-based learning, and ID could feature in this inquiry. 2. "They're going to hear about it anyway." 3. ID can be taught well, in a non-proselytising way. 4. Let's teach the philosophy of science. 5. ID arguments are interesting. 6. We should discuss with students what should be taught), a tension between Monton's version of ID and what we might term the *real* ID becomes apparent; a tension heightened when Monton considers objections to his view.

"We'd be teaching religion!", the objector says to Monton. Monton reasserts that ID is not necessarily inherently religious. I refer to my previous criticisms as to why this is deeply disingenuous, given the actual context in which ID plays out. "We'd be misrepresenting the content of science!"; Monton replies, again, that ID is 'legitimate' science; I reply, again, that though Monton's version of ID may be, the classical version of ID, as found in *Of Pandas and People*, does not meet the standards

required to qualify as 'science'. This is not the same as saying it is 'not science', merely that it is 'unscientific'; it is not good enough 'science' to be taught *as science* to schoolchildren. "We'd be ignoring consensus!" and "We wouldn't be teaching a real controversy!"; Monton responds by pointing out that Newtonian physics is not the consensus view in science either, and yet is considered acceptable to teach; perhaps we can teach 'critical thinking' by considering the controversies of ID, along with the issues of the Newtonian versus the contemporary paradigm? Finally, Monton considers the objection that we'd be asking too much of teachers and students to achieve all of this. His response is a reiteration of an idealised 'inquiry-based learning' scenario, and a claim that denying this option is nothing more than an attempt to preserve the status quo.

Are we to expect every high-school science teacher to be expert enough in the areas of philosophy of science (and religion), theoretical physics, and the post-doctoral level biology necessary for a complete understanding of the proposed 'controversy' surrounding ID? Are we to expect every student to take this on board in the 'correct' way, to at least a similar degree to which they currently take on board the 'fact-based' educational experience? Are we even dealing with *this* proposal as our option, or are we rather deciding whether *Of Pandas and People* and *The Design of Life* are appropriate to use in the classroom?

Which teachers would take up the opportunity to teach ID, and would they teach Monton's philosophical version or the classical theistic version? Irrespective of what *could* occur, what is actually likely to occur? He concludes his book with a flourish – "I envision my writings being read many years from now, in a cultural climate without the sort of heated rhetoric that we have now, and I picture those readers saying: "yes, Monton had it right."" This reader does not agree.

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Godehard Brüntrup, Matthias Rugel, and Maria Schwartz (eds.),
***Auferstehung des Leibes – Unsterblichkeit der Seele* [Resurrection of
the Body – Immoratily of the Soul],** *Stuttgart*: **Kohlhammer, 2010.**

Perhaps there are two main factors which complicate the reception of
analytic philosophy of religion and analytic theology in the German
speaking academic world: the lack of translations of key texts and a certain
separation between recent work in analytic philosophy of religion and
conventional theological discussions. With the present volume, the
editors intend to bring together the different perspectives with regard to
an important doctrine of Christian faith, the expectation of eternal life
and the resurrection of the dead. The book gathers thirteen essays many
of which have been previously published (mostly in English), "striving
with existential seriousness for a reasonable understanding of our hope
for resurrection".

It starts with three well known theological treatises that have already
received great interest during the last decades and are still to be regarded
as reference texts in the field of eschatology. More than half a century
ago, Oscar Cullmann argued for a radical distinction between the biblical
concept of resurrection and the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the
soul ("Unsterblichkeit der Seele oder Auferstehung der Toten?", 13-24).
In Cullmann's salvation-historical perspective, there is no intermediary
state between the death of man at the end of his earthly life and his
resurrection with body and soul at the end of time. As Gisbert Greshake
correctly points out ("Das Verhältnis 'Unsterblichkeit der Seele' und
'Auferstehung des Leibes' in problemgeschichtlicher Sicht", 25-42), the
enormous success of this critical comparison within Protestant theology
in the twentieth century results from its close relationship to one of the
central issues in Dialectical Theology: While liberal Protestantism in the
nineteenth century had limited eschatological expectations to the mere
survival of the individual soul, for recent theologians the slogan
"resurrection instead of immortality" is a consequence of the Lutheran
doctrine of justification, in which man as a sinner, impotent to save
himself, is rescued from death only by the grace and power of God.

Greshake's essay shows that many Catholic theologians have also been inspired by the challenges of Protestant thinkers to realize more clearly the problems associated with the traditional assumption of a bodiless soul surviving death and to abandon far-reaching philosophical speculation on eternal life in favor of purely theological arguments. Nevertheless, Greshake, like most Catholic scholars, tries to avoid the consequence that there may be a gap in human existence between death and resurrection. The solution he offers is a "Resurrection in Death" theory, in which a disembodied intermediate state is replaced by an immediate transformation of man into a non-material bodily existence in the moment of death. Has the concept of "soul" therefore become superfluous? Gerd Haeffner reminds us that there are still valuable philosophical arguments to defend "something indestructible in man" that is required to guarantee personal identity even after death („Vom Unzerstörbaren im Menschen: Versuch einer philosophischen Annäherung an ein problematisch gewordenes Theologumenon", 43-58). Haeffner discusses the most important arguments from practical philosophy as well as from metaphysics and distinguishes his results from widespread misconceptions about the nature of soul. Thomas Schärtl classifies the basic models for understanding resurrection in the current scholarly debates with particular reference to the problem of self-identity and persistence much discussed by recent analytic philosophers („Was heißt ‚Auferstehung des Leibes'?", 59-80). Since Schärtl himself is arguing for a model of the embodied person's transformation in death, his paper can be regarded as philosophical support of Greshake's arguments. Two positions equally criticized by Schärtl are developed in the following papers. Eleonore Stump, a major representative of analytical Thomism, defends the possibility of a bodiless survival of death and the expectation of the restitution of the body at resurrection day („Auferstehung, Wiederzusammensetzung und Rekonstitution: Thomas von Aquin über die Seele", 81-100). Resurrection therefore is to be considered as reconstitution of metaphysical parts. In opposition to these considerations substance dualism is strongly rejected by Christian materialists that play a considerable part in today's English speaking philosophy of religion, deeply influenced by the materialist monism of modern science and its consequences for the philosophy of mind. In Continental theology, Christian materialists are still rare, but in

the present volume their arguments have been taken into serious account. Peter van Inwagen reminds us that any Christian who refuses dualism for philosophical reasons, cannot only refer to the bible but also retains the ability to defend his hope for resurrection („Dualismus und Materialismus: Athen und Jerusalem?", 101-116). Van Inwagen himself is the author of a much debated proposal that has been taken up by Dean Zimmerman („Die Kompatibilität von Materialismus und Überleben: Das Modell des ‚Fallenden Aufzugs'", 117-138). In the moment of biological death God may enable the survival of a human being replacing his body (or an essential part of it) by the corpse in a miracle that is empirically not verifiable. Man would be preserved in another world in a way that allows his resurrection on Judgment Day. In Zimmerman's paper, Van Inwagen's "Body Snatching" view has received some modification still on the basis of its materialist premises. In connection with a physicalist theory of human persistence, in which spatiotemporal continuity of the body is a necessary condition, it may be conceivable that in the moment of death God enables the simples which compose the body to fission into two nearest followers. The body of the dying person would be causally related without a gap in existence to the corpse remaining on earth as well as to a new "resurrection body" in heaven. Personal identity in this view depends on immanent-causal connections between all stages of bodily human existence, but not on the identity of material elements. To Alvin Platinga, Zimmerman's suggestion sounds a little bit "fantastic" („Materialismus und christlicher Glaube", 139-164). In his view, the problems Christian materialists have with explaining central doctrines of faith can serve as an important argument for accepting a dualist position. In philosophy of mind, "emergentism" has been presented as a middle way between (materialistic) monism and traditional dualism. According to William Hasker („Emergenter Dualismus und Auferstehung", 165-187), its chief concern is to describe human mind, in conformity with natural science, as result of the brain. It "emerges" when the necessary material constituents are given under certain complex circumstances. But unlike materialistic materialism, emergentism does not claim to explain consciousness and other characteristics of the mind on the basis of material properties. Although this theory cannot offer any evidence for human survival after death, it affirms the logical possibility that God may miraculously sustain the field

of consciousness even after the brain has been destroyed and that he may restore a material basis in the resurrection of the body. Similar to emergentism is the anthropological idea of constitution presented by Lynne Baker („Personen und die Metaphysik der Auferstehung", 189-208). Human persons are material objects, constituted by their bodies, but they are not identical with them, because the crucial feature of personhood is the first-person-perspective. The persistence of a person therefore is guaranteed by the persistence of this perspective, and it is possible that the person survives a certain transformation of her body as long as the latter serves as a basis for identical self-consciousness. Because this condition can be fulfilled by the power of God, Baker recognizes the possibility of resurrection without postulating an immaterial soul. A second essay by Peter van Inwagen combines a review of his earlier proposals for a materialistic understanding of resurrection with a thorough discussion of Baker's Constitution View („„Ich erwarte die Auferstehung der Toten und das Leben der kommenden Welt"", 209-225). Van Inwagen is not convinced that God can provide a person after resurrection with a first-person perspective numerically identical with the one that constitutes her as a person here and now without genuine physical continuity. Hud Hudson is another contemporary representative of "a materialist metaphysics of the human person" who nevertheless argues for the possibility of post-mortem existence („Vielfach und einfach verortete Auferstehung", 227-241). Against animalism and the theories developed by Baker, van Inwagen and Zimmerman, Hudson takes as his starting point a perdurantist, four-dimensional perspective of human persistence. Things are not only constituted by spatial dimensions, but also by their extension in time. Between the existence in our earthly body and in our new material body after resurrection there may be a temporal gap that does not destroy identity. As an alternative to this assumption based on mereological arguments, Hudson offers a second solution depending on his "hyperspace hypothesis" (explained in detail in the book "The Metaphysics of Hyperspace" published in 2005): Our four-dimensional spacetime may be only one region in a greater continuum of physically independent spacetimes. With these premises, he can develop new models of persistence that differ according to the number and nature of regions an object is related to. If human beings are material objects standing in local relation to more than one region with different

temporal indices, or if they are located in only one region of space, that has two or more distinct temporal parts, resurrection could be possible. In the volume's concluding piece, Godehard Brüntrup outlines a possible alternative way of recognizing persistence with avoidance of the problems arising from standard endurantist or perdurantist accounts („3,5-Dimensionalismus und Überleben: ein prozess-ontologischer Ansatz", 245-268). Departing from the principles of process ontology, he intends to bring together the aspects of continuity and transformation with regard to human beings in a more convincing theory named "3.5 dimensionalism". A subject has to be considered as diachronic a "series of momentary psycho-physical events", in which there is no strict separation between physical and mental properties. These events are not identical, but connected by immanent causation. Therefore, persons are not "substances" in the classical sense of the word, but entities that consist of "slices" connected by "gen-identity" relations. But what can guarantee the unity of a person in this bundle-view, if its specific difference to all other kinds of beings consists in the first-person perspective, the person's stream of consciousness? Following on Whitehead, Brüntrup conceives enduring individual beings ("continuants") on analogy with universals (abstract entities) in a conceptualist approach: They never exist without a mind that recognizes relations and determines identity. Personal identity is the connection of different events to a stable process under the presupposition that there is an abstractive mind to discover repeating patterns in causally connected events, thus defining the "substantial form" of continuants. In the moment of death the chain of events that constitute persons is interrupted. But God could make the person survive by creating a subsequent event that is connected to the last one in earthly life. His intervention guarantees the objective connection of all subject-related stages before and after death and at the same time the possibility of "resurrection".

With its careful selection of essays the volume offers a comprehensive overview of the complex discussions concerning the persistence of human beings, their possible survival of death and the rationality of the belief in resurrection in the area of contemporary analytic philosophy. German readers familiar with traditional theological eschatology may be surprised about the relevance of Christian materialism in these discourses and about the fact that there are modern philosophers of religion

that do not much care about theological warnings of eschatological "physicalism". It is less surprising that the historically well-known affinity between materialistic and idealistic monism is returning in current debates – the step from a psycho-physiological view of the mind as an emergent capacity of the brain to pan-psychism seems not to be too big. When boundaries between opposed theoretical attitudes become more permeable, strictly dualist positions lose some of their appeal, although they are still present. Unfortunately, in the limited context of a review it is not possible to enter into the discussion of the various theories outlined in the volume and to ask for the consequences that they imply (e.g. in regard to the concept of God or to other eschatological topics). Both philosophers and theologians who rise to these challenges, particularly in the context of academic courses, will use this book with great profit